Educational transition, disadvantage and adolescent identity development: Measuring change using the identitygram approach

by

Deborah Brewer

B.SocWork (Monash University) MEd (UTAS)

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Declaration of Originality

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief it contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text, the thesis or in the statement of co-authorship, nor does the thesis contain any material that infringes copyright.

Statement of Authorship and Co-authorship

The following people and institutions contributed to the publication of work undertaken as part of this thesis:
Candidate – Deborah Brewer
Author 1 – Kim Beswick

Contribution of work by co-authors for each paper:

PAPER 1:

Brewer, D. (2015). *Tasmania's hidden dragons: Tackling education participation equity beyond year 10*. In E. Stratford, & S. Kilpatrick (Eds.). *Education transformation: Papers and reflections* (pp. 106-112). The Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment. Retrieved from http://www.utas.edu.au/underwood-centre/EducationTransforms2015/_nocache

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Conceived and designed experiment: Candidate, Author 1
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Author contributions:
Conceived and designed experiment: Candidate, Author 1
Performed the experiments: Candidate
Analysed the data: Candidate
Contributed reagents/materials/analysis tools: Candidate
Wrote the manuscript: Candidate

We, the undersigned, endorse the above stated contribution of work undertaken for each of the published (or submitted) peer-reviewed manuscripts contributing to this thesis:
Signed:

Deborah Brewer	Karen Swabey	Victoria Carrington
Candidate	Primary Supervisor	Head of School
School of Education	School of Education	School of Education
University of Tasmania	University of Tasmania	University of Tasmania
Date:		
27/03/2018	25/11/2019	25/11/2019

Authority of Access

Statement of Ethical Conduct

The research associated with this thesis abides by the international and Australian codes on human and animal experimentation, the guidelines by the Australian Government's Office of the Gene Technology Regulator, and the rulings of the Safety, Ethics and Institutional Biosafety Committees of the University.

The research was given full ethics approval by the Human Research Ethics (Tasmania) Network, University of Tasmania reference number H0012705 on 1st of October 2012.

Abstract

This study sought to explore adolescent students' self-identity and educational identity, and to understand if these identities influenced students' educational decision-making. Drawing mainly on the theoretical work of Bronfenbrenner (1977), and to a less extent that of Rogoff (1998), Bourdieu (1991) and Teese (2007), this study investigated the notion that the students' socio-economic contexts help shape the students' participation choices and the development of their school identity. Specifically, the study considered if students' school, home and community experiences could be mapped using an alternative assessment procedure to written surveys, instead involving students' use of icons (pictures). The collage of pictures selected by the students is identified in this research as an 'identitygram'. The notion is that the pictures are, in part, representing the identity of the student.

The target cohort was Tasmanian high school students transitioning from secondary school setting (Years 7 to 10) to a separate senior school campus Years 11 to 12). The age of the students in Year 10 clusters around 14 to 15 years of age. Tasmanian has one of the lowest rates of Year 12 completion rates across Australia. The causes of this low retention are reported to be linked both to higher levels of welfare dependency across the state and to lower student aspirations to transition to post-secondary education after Year 12. How to enhance the Year 12 retention rates and advance students' post Year 12 aspirations are core concerns of this research.

This research is in two parts. Firstly, the pilot study involved the development and trialling of a set of icons that related to students' schooling, lives and aspirations. The participants were eight Year 10 students (5 male and 3 female) who attended a non-government urban high school. On each data collection occasion each participant

was provided with a full 'kit' of 80 icons (pictures) developed by the researcher to select from, cut out and apply to paper to create each visual identity collage. Once finished, each collage became an identitygram. Each of the identitygram collages was coded separately for data analysis using NVivo (2016) software programming. Using a second cohort of Year 10 students, the second study further tested whether the icons changed after a brief orientation to Year 11 and 12 program of activities. The participants were 14, Year 10 students (7 males and 7 females) attending government high schools. The four research questions that guided the study were:

1 Is the identitygram procedure a suitable method to investigate students' self-identity?

2 Does school disadvantage influence students' depictions of their self-identity, as shown in their identitygrams?

3 What are the concerns of teachers for their students from disadvantaged communities as the students transition into Years 11and 12?

4 Does a brief Year 11 and 12 orientation course enhance Year 10 students' depictions of their self-identity?

The evidence is that an 'identitygram' (picture collage) provided the researcher with an investigative tool through which to explore students' aspirations and fears using a non-threating medium. The findings supported the notion that the use of pictures (icons) produced a stable self-identity profile. It encouraged Year 10 adolescent students to talk about themselves in an interview setting that enabled the students to self-reflect.

The findings also denoted that a brief Year 11 and 12 orientation course did bring about some changes in the students' icon complexity. This change was more in

the selection of icons that related to the students' aspirations for future education. Data from students from more disadvantaged settings were associated with fewer education related icons when developing their identitygram, compared to their peers from higher socio-economic locations. This lends support to the theory that the social context influences an individual's self-identity.

The teacher interview data noted that the students from disadvantaged communities typically lacked confidence about their future aspirations and had limited understanding of educational opportunities. The teachers recognised that in the Tasmanian context shifting from a Year 7-10 campus into a senior school Years 11 and 12 was problematic and that preparing students for that transition could be enhanced. The critical finding is an identitygram methodology provides educators and others with a useful focussing tool when seeking to better understand and explore youth self-identity.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to Warren Brewer, who was a true humanist, an inspirational educator and, the most amazing dad. He loved us all more than words can say, and we loved him back the same.

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Chapter 1

Introduction and start of literature review

1.1 Overview, Key Terms and Identity Formation

The primary aim of this research was to explore and better understand adolescent students' personal construct of 'self-identity' and the sub-construct, 'educational identity'. The research sought to understand how these 'constructs of self' influence students' educational decision making, particularly in the educational transition period of adolescence when young people begin to undertake more specialised studies. The research focused on Tasmanian adolescent students living in an urban environment and attending schools located in communities of disadvantage. The research engaged with a cohort of students at the point in time when they were making future-oriented decisions around their education participation as they transitioned from junior secondary (Year 10) to senior secondary education (Year 11-12) schools.

Key Terms

There are a number of key terms that are used across this thesis and the following pertains to their meaning and usage. The term 'at risk' in the context of this research study refers to students who have disengaged or are seen by their teachers as highly likely to disengage from education and not compete Year 11 and 12. The term 'disadvantage' refers more to financial disadvantage in the home. Self-identity is explored in the context of education and schooling and the questions related to 'who you are' and the related questions of 'what is important to you' and 'what interests you.' Polysemicity is used in this study to

denote that there may be a range of possible meanings depending on the person's interpretation, such that each icon has polysemicity.

Self-Identity

Self-identity is a key factor explored in this study along with its influence on students' decisions as they transition to Year 11. Identity is positioned in this research as a personal resource that is utilised in educational decision-making (Cote 1996). To explore this factor, an analysis of dimensional richness of self-identity was undertaken. The participants provided identity data through self-conceptualised depictions of self-identity (Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). At the time of data collection, the student participants in the research were making future subject and course decisions while undertaking their generalist Year 10 studies. The research collected the students' identity data late in the school year, just prior to the students completing Year 10 of junior secondary school before their transition to another campus for senior secondary school the following year. On each data collection occasion each participant was provided with a full 'kit' of 80 icons (pictures) developed by the researcher to select from, cut out and apply to paper to create each visual identity collage. Once finished, each collage became an identitygram. Each of the identitygram collages was coded separately for data analysis using NVivo (2016) software programming.

1.2 Research Questions and Outline of Study

The purpose of this research was to explore educational transition for Year 10 students from disadvantaged settings into a Year 11 and 12 senior school program. The first investigative lens placed education participation and educational outcomes as identity constructs and these constructs as a dimension of the self-identity of students. Conceptualising educational identity as a dimension of identity enabled the researcher to learn how this dimension of self-identity might influence and impact student's educational

decision-making. Conceptualising educational identity within the context of the school and the school community enabled the investigation to shed light on the socio-ecological context of the students' school experience and how that may have created or limited educational opportunities for students as they made future oriented decisions about participation in secondary education in urban Tasmania, Australia. Consideration of the issues involved, after a review of relevant international literature, led to the formulation of the four research questions that guided the study:

1. Is the identitygram procedure a suitable method to investigate students' self-identity?
2. Does school disadvantage influence students' depictions of their self-identity, as shown in their identitygrams?
3. What are the concerns of teachers for their students from disadvantaged communities transitioning into Year 11?
4. Does a brief orientation to Year 11 and 12 course enhance Year 10 students' future depictions of their self-identity?

This research is in two parts. The first study involved the development of a set of icons (pictures) that related to adolescent students' schooling, lives, and aspirations and the develop of the identitygrams as a method of engaging students. The second study was conducted with students identified as 'at risk' of low educational aspirations by their teachers. This second cohort of students participated in a short-term orientation to Years 11 and 12 course of study to enable investigation of the stability of the icons students selected to express their school and their aspirations. Related to this the teachers of the Year 10 students were interviewed to ascertain their perceptions of students transitioning into Year 11s and 12. The core purpose of this research was; however, to investigate if icons have application

within an educational setting and if they can assist students to have a conversation with others about their schooling and their educational aspirations.

1.3 Background to the Research

Gonski et al. (2011) and Masters (2016) identified a group of Australian children whose social disadvantage influenced their educational experience. Masters noted that children from disadvantaged settings started school with fewer skills to begin formal academic learning and that this early learning gap was hard to close as the students progressed in their schooling. Gonski et al. (2011) also noted that the impact of disadvantage persisted on the educational outcomes of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Some claim that the chance of a student from a background of disadvantage achieving their full educational potential is no better now than it was 10 years ago (Goss, Sonnemann, Chisholm, & Nelson, 2016). Education can lift people out of poverty (Masters, 2016), yet for many it does not offer this relief and the disadvantage experienced in childhood lasts a lifetime (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009). Compounding disadvantage occurs when students experience ongoing social and economic disadvantage at home and in their community such that over time these students who are from lower socio-economic schools have a reduction in their school performance (Lamb, Jackson, Walstab, & Huo, 2015).

The concern is that a school located in an economically disadvantaged community is unlikely to have the resources to offer the curriculum programs that scaffold and promote good educational decisions based on strengths and capacities (von Stumm & Plomin, 2015). On this point, Morris, Dorling and Smith (2016) in their UK study provided evidence that equal cognitive ability in early childhood does not always equal educational attainment, if the children live in a disadvantaged community. These researchers concluded that students with the same early cognitive ability had poorer educational outcomes, if those students

attended schools within socially and economically disadvantaged settings. The school community's social and economic deprivation significantly affected, in a negative way, educational achievement over time. The Morris et al. study noted that the gap in students' academic outcomes increased between the economically wealthy schools and the economically disadvantaged schools, as the students' education progressed. Quoting Morris et al. the specific claim is:

> This relationship is so strong that children in the bottom quartile of cognitive ability attending fee-paying schools (wealthier schools) perform broadly similar in A-levels to children in state schools who are in the quartile above them for cognitive ability, and children in all other quartiles attending fee-paying schools perform at least as well as children in the highest quartile of ability who attend state schools. (p. 162)

One assertion is that education provides many students living in circumstances of extreme and inter-generational disadvantage a pathway out of life-long welfare dependence and poverty (Rogers, 1969; The Salvation Army, 2014; Shor, 1992). This notion is reflected in what Rogers (1969) called an "empowering education philosophy" that seeks to increase the participation of disadvantaged people in education for both their personal well-being and the well-being of their broader communities. This empowering education philosophy is also explored by Masters (2016) who argued, in his report about challenges in Australian schools, that children experiencing disadvantage at home indicated their educational vulnerability even before they begin school. These pre-school aged children are identifiable through social and economic data before beginning school, yet often many will remain educationally vulnerable throughout their schooling.

This research study draws on the theoretical work of Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979) and the notion that the social, cultural and economic environment directly and indirectly

influences a person's thinking and behaviour. In the context of this study the focus is on the issue of how the students' socio-ecological contexts influence the education participation decision-making of Year 10 students in Tasmania transitioning to Year 11 and 12. The evidence is the choices and decisions students make in junior secondary school will directly and indirectly influence the next stage of the students' life and beyond (Mills, 2015). In addition the choices students make about their schooling is influenced by their self-perceptions of their abilities and the feedback they receive from others within their social network, such as peers, parents and teachers (Hattie, 2014).

1.4 The Research Context

Internationally, students from lower Socio-Economic Status (SES) backgrounds are associated with lower educational completion to Year 12, lower school and employment aspiration, lower post-school participation in higher education and reduced opportunities to break out of the cycle of limited employment and greater poverty (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent, & Scales, 2008). In Australia, students from low SES communities often fail to connect with senior secondary schooling and higher education institutions because of the cost of schooling, transport difficulties from regional centres to the senior colleges, timetabling issues, and resource limitation (Abbott-Chapman, 2011; Lamb, Walstab, Teese, Vickers, & Rumberger, 2004). Based on Tasmanian research, the evidence is that students from low SES backgrounds have lower post-secondary school retention rates and that measures which counteract inequity and build student engagement and resilience are a key to encouraging participation and retention (Abbott-Chapman, Gall, Ollington, Martin, & Dwyer, 2011).

In some communities in Tasmania, Australia, disadvantage has become intergenerational and culturally entrenched and some schools find it very difficult to respond and counteract disadvantage when it is occurring for so many of their students (The

Salvation Army, 2014). Transition from high school (Year 10) into senior schooling (Year 11and 12) in Tasmania is identified as a stress point for many students from disadvantaged communities (Abbott-Chapman, 2011). How to reduce that transition stress into senior schooling is a core focus of this research. The claim is that transition from Year 10 to Year 11 and 12 draws on their personal understandings of their learning ability, their interests and aspirations and their expectations of schooling (Cranston et al., 2016).

Year 10 in Tasmania is the transition point at which students who may not have achieved academically are advised and directed away from higher level, Tasmanian Certificate of Education (TCE) Level-3 academic subjects, because of the entry standard required. Passes in Level 3 Year 10 subjects are often pre-requisites to 'pre-tertiary' (university entrance) subject enrolment in Year 11. Students who reach the end of Year 10 without a clear idea of what they wish to achieve from their Year 11 and 12 participation may present as ambivalent about their future in a general sense and about their choices and participation in more specialised subject education in Years 11 and 12 (Coll & Falsafi, 2010).

Education participation decisions can be difficult for some young people during the developmental period of adolescence. The process of making future-oriented subject and learning stream choices requires young people to draw upon their knowledge of themselves, such as their specific interests, attributes, academic strengths and application competencies, as they prepare to transition from generalist study in Year 10 to more specialist study programs in Year 11 (Cote & Schwartz, 2002). Knowing-self provides adolescent students with vital information (Avi & Hanoch, 2012) needed to make good participation decisions. These decisions are necessary, logical, and appropriately expected by senior secondary schools for students of this age and cognitive and social developmental stage. These decisions allow students to progress from generalist subject knowledge to undertake more

specialised senior secondary study in academic subject areas such as for example, Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), or vocational streams. The course and subject participation decisions students make prior to beginning senior secondary school (Years 11 and 12) are important.

The student participants in the main part of this investigation were from two low SES schools. These students were identified by their teachers as unlikely to be attending senior secondary school full-time by the end of Term 1 (Year 11) in the following year, and educationally ambivalent about their Year 11 and 12 education participation. The participants were in an educational transition phase, transitioning at the end of that school year from their junior secondary government school located in their local community to a nearby senior secondary government school. There are eight specialist Year 11 and 12 schools in Tasmania, called 'colleges'. These colleges bring together students from a number of junior secondary (Year 7 to 10) feeder schools. College students present as a diverse community as students converge from public and private schools, low, middle and higher income groups, and a range of class groups, sub-cultures and cultures. The College (Year 11 and 12) population also includes humanitarian refugee students and a significantly sized cohort of international fee-paying students. The inclusive approaches and strategies employed by the school community to bring this diverse student population together are, in the main, quite effective.

Although the socio-visual method used by the researcher primarily gathered identity data that provided information about the students as individuals, the investigation also took into consideration environmental influences from their teachers' perspectives. The socio-ecological approach adopted by the research allowed investigative consideration of how the education system environment influences student's education development and decision-making, and how opportunities and options play their part in determining educational

outcomes. The teacher participants' insights enabled the researcher to understand better the impact of economic, cultural and social dimensions of disadvantage and poverty on education participation in senior secondary school. Consideration of the inherent environmental deficiencies of growing up and living in poverty and attending a public school located in a community of disadvantage with other students also experiencing poverty was an important influence on methodological decisions. The environment of school in a community context was an important factor in understanding barriers to education participation. Previous research had presented an ominous impression of the struggle some Tasmanian schools face in counteracting both home and community disadvantage (Abbott-Chapman et al., 2011).

The Australian Government Productivity Commission *Report on Government Services* (2016) findings indicated that access, experiential and resource deficiencies were significant factors that contributed to a fundamental type of inequity experienced by schools located in disadvantaged communities. Public schools carry the greatest burden of educating children and young people living in communities of disadvantage (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014; Gonski et al., 2011).

This thesis investigates whether the school experiences of students who are from impoverished and disadvantaged home and community backgrounds adequately equip them with the self-identity resources required for effective participation decision-making when educationally transiting to senior secondary school. A lack of self-resources in the context of education transition equates to self-identity vulnerability because identity-construct may lack viability in an education decision-making setting (Bornstein & Bradley, 2003). The indications are that both economic and cultural aspects of the students' home and community can be barriers to education participation beyond Year 10 because of the affects poverty has on the development of self-identity.

Poverty in the home and the wider communities create external stresses on families and individuals, which, in turn, affect students' education and their educational expectations (Lamb et al., 2015). In addition, schools located in economically disadvantaged communities often have limited access to the human services and economic resources, including health, sporting, cultural, and welfare services needed to assist students achieve their potential (Connor et al., 2001). Certainly poverty reduces the opportunity to do extended extra-curricular activities that help form the students' social capital (Semo & Karmel, 2011).

The original design and development of the identitygram approach was informed by the researcher's prior professional knowledge as a social worker with vulnerable families and later as a teacher in a secondary school located in a disadvantaged community. In addition, these teaching experiences prompted the researcher to investigate whether a brief orientation to Year 11 and 12 course assisted Year 10 students to reflect on their schooling and its options.

1.5 Adolescence and Education Participation

Maintaining young people in meaningful and constructive education is an imperative for human and community development through the positive social capital made possible when schools act as communities (Connors & Kenney, 2017). The concern is that many school students from disadvantaged communities may have limited ideas of what their longer-term options may be after completing compulsory school (Connor et al., 2001; Norris & Francis, 2014). Young people construct the ideas and aspirations that they form around their future life within a socio-ecological context. This context of ideas and aspirations can be enhanced through learning and through pedagogies that create strong and respectful adult relationships with significant teachers, mentors and others in the school environment including the extra-curricular environment. School can broaden and enrich students' experiences through the

curriculum and through robust and engaging cultural, social, sport and recreation programs and activities (Norris & Francis, 2014).

When transition from high school to senior secondary school is successful, the student is more likely to complete senior secondary (Cranston et al., 2016). Tasmanian senior secondary school is different to junior secondary school as it is more focused on post school options. It can provide a cultural environment and extra-curriculum activities along with more individualised study programs. This is an attractive cultural and study environment for adolescent students. Research conducted in Tasmania has found that continuing through adolescence as a member of a school community helps create the positive socio-cultural climate that is important for encouraging students' engagement and raising aspirations (Abbott-Chapman et al., 2011; Semo & Karmel, 2011).

1.6 Social and Educational Capital

Several communities in Tasmania have geographically clustered intergenerational unemployment and poverty (Abbott-Chapman, 2015). When disadvantage is entrenched socio-ecologically in families and communities, students level of education participation can be affected (Gale & Dinsmore, 2000). In Australia, most working class and middle- or upper-class families and communities place value on education attainment (The Salvation Army, 2014). It is generally accepted in Australia that the adults in families will, to varying degrees, support and encourage younger family members' education participation and effort. Yet, for many young people living in communities where disadvantage is entrenched, education ambivalence disguises education-apathy (The Salvation Army, 2014).

Tasmanian researchers (Watson et al., 2016) have noted that higher levels of student school absenteeism, lower socio-economic status of the students' families, and perceived poorer student transitioning from high school to senior secondary school reduced students'

educational aspiration scores. The Watson et al. (2016) study noted adolescent girls compared to adolescent boys reported higher scores for three factors: (1) level of teacher support, (2) high English ability, and, (3) educational aspirations. Regression analysis identified that for both Tasmanian boys and girls, friends and peers, English and mathematics ability, and teacher support were the 'best predictors' of students' aspiration to the students continuing on to their Year 12 schooling. With reference to aspirations, Taylor and Rampino (2014) maintained adolescent boys responded more than adolescent girls to positive parental factors when forming their educational aspirations. Even so, the educational attitudes and aspirations of boys deteriorate earlier than girls, such that by senior schooling there were gender differences in terms of long term educational aspirations.

One barrier to education participation in environments of social cultural and economic disadvantage lies in the limitations formed through conceptual unknowing. Students from poor families living in poor communities and attending resource-poor schools, through their lived experience, may not have come to know education as anything useful or be able to conceive education as offering a more fulfilling alternative future different from what they imagine. Knowing and being able to conceive the cultural value of education comes from personally knowing, and seeing others you associate with, experiencing how purposeful and viable education participation options create and enhance life opportunities (Connors & Kenney, 2017; Rumberger, 2011).

1.7 Self-Identity and Education Participation

Young people tend to perceive their schooling as more meaningful and constructive if they believe their educational program of study is relevant and that their school is helping them to form more positive and achievable goals (Rumberger, 2011). Positive and achievable educational goal-setting enhances self-identity formation (Hattie, 2014). Thus, for young

people, the time spent in school and the school community setting provides an important opportunity to explore their self-identity and to understand better ‘who they are’ and ‘what they are good at’ as a scaffold to positive and achievable educational gaol setting. The indications are that enhanced self-identity development occurs through constructive feedback from others, the students’ comparison peer reference-group learning and positive and rich learning experiences (Hattie, 2014). The school setting provides many opportunities for students to review feedback from peers, teachers and others, such that school plays a significant role in influencing self-identity formation for adolescents. This point and the notion that schools can help students develop positive social capital through participation and engagement is further reviewed in the Literature Review, Chapter 2.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

The researcher brought to the research perceptions that reflect insights related to several different approaches to studying social phenomena. These perceptions are based upon personal beliefs about the nature of how we acquire knowledge, the reality of how institutions work, and how society is ordered. The researcher preferred more of a sociological paradigm (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) and therefore the researcher’s perceptions about social phenomena, have influenced how this research was conceived and undertaken. These perceptions were acquired through life experience, formal study and many years working in schools and communities experiencing disadvantage. The qualitative approach taken to collect the student data therefore reveals the researcher’s beliefs and values. As Morgan and Smircich (1980) pointed out, qualitative research is an approach rather than a set of techniques. The appropriateness of the methodology must be ultimately determined in relation to the social phenomena to be explored.

Because this research is focussed on students' self-identity, attitudes and beliefs, encouraging the students to talk about their attitudes and beliefs is a core aspect of the methodology developed. Thus the focus of the research methodology is interviews; the participants themselves are at the foreground of the investigation (Ife, 2013). In interview-focussed research the researcher's role is in helping to interpret and organising the interview data (Creswell, 2008). Interview research procedures have a long history in the social sciences, with Mead (1967) noting that objects and pictures also need be considered when engaging in interview data collection. Mead identified her interview approach as a constructivist approach. The objects and pictures were symbolic of how individuals understood their social context. The role of the researcher is to focus more on how language and symbols give meaning to the person's experiences and actions. A constructivist approach has elements of grounded theory in that the objects and pictures have to be interpreted by the individual involved (Charmaz, 2014). In grounded theory the researcher sets out to investigate an issue but does not have fully developed or pre-determined hypotheses, rather the hypotheses about what is occurring develop as the interactions and talk with the participants develops and are reviewed (Birks & Mills, 2011). In grounded theory the researcher's role and pre-existing perceptions need be acknowledged and tested, using researcher reflexivity at each stage of data analysis as a check against possible researcher bias (Charmaz, 2014). Constructivist research methods include cyclic and participatory approaches to the construction of a possible theory of what is occurring from 'the coalface' up. Constructivism also acknowledges that research is a process of ongoing data collection and interpretation, with the claim that interview data are 'rich' in meaning if the participants are encouraged and persuaded to talk and express their opinions openly with the researcher (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2014; Reicher, Haslam, & Hopkins, 2005). How to

encourage and persuade the participants from disadvantaged communities to open up and express their feelings and believes about schooling is at the core of this research.

The nature of the study

The nature of the issues investigated by this research is complex. Theoretically, the issue has individual, family, social, cultural and systemic dimensions and has been labelled a 'wicked' problem (Cranston et al., 2014; Masters, 2016). 'Wicked' social problems often are ambiguous and can be entrenched in community, culture and institutions. Addressing such problems can require significant micro-, meso- and exosystemic changes. For systemic whole-of-community change to be effective and sustainable it must be achieved through the active engagement of those individuals closest to the problem who are affected by the issues (Ife, 2013; Reicher et al., 2005). Incremental and dynamic solutions to complex social problems can take decades and require multi-dimensional and cooperative endeavours across levels of government, the non-government and business sectors, by whole communities and individuals within the populations affected by the problem. Problems of this type are not simple, do not have one solution (Cranston et al., 2014) and need to be considered from a number of perspectives (Weber, 2013).

1.9 Research Methods

This study's methodology takes an iterative, inductive approach (O'Reilly, 2008). The process utilises mixed methods and is multi-staged and multi-layered. The inductive approach reflects the researcher's social ethnographic perspective and the associated principles of how best to conduct an ethnographic investigation in an education setting. Schools operate within the social context of the community, so investigations conducted with an appreciation of the nature of learning and teaching and the development of young people within community offer insights not provided by singular methods (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Even so, there is often a macro-variable being considered in qualitative research

(Creswell, 2008). In terms of this notion, it is the exploration of the macro-variable of low SES and its influence on students' education outcomes that underpins this research.

Students and teachers from three junior secondary schools (Years 7 to 10) participated in this research. The two participating public schools were part of the main study and a non-government school took part as the pilot school to test the student data collection approach. In terms of the socio-economic status of the schools the students in the non-government school had higher SES ratings. The teacher interviews were conducted with teachers from the schools located in the lower socio-economic communities. The interviews investigated the teachers' views about the school experiences of transitioning students at the time when these students were making future oriented decisions.

The use of icons as a method of understanding the students' aspirations is linked to the self-identity research. From this perspective, students' self- identity was conceptualised within a broader context of what Cote (1996) called "identity capital". For Cote, understanding self-identity involved individuals addressing for themselves how their broader cultural setting and their own identity development interacted with what is occurring socio-ecologically at the micro and macro levels of influence. In part, Cote's notion of self-identity and identity capital shares with Bronfenbrenner and Ceci (1994) the idea that the ecological and cultural context within which the individual is located, influences and shapes that individual's behaviours, actions, and thinking. The Cote (1996) concept of identity capital was derived from an interaction between the individual and a set of variables that were drawn from the person's macro and micro culture settings, as well as the person's own psychological processing. The claim is that identity capital helps in "depicting how individuals can better negotiate life passages in an increasingly individualistic, complex and chaotic world" (Cote, 1996, p. 419).

The student data collection method enabled the participants to create identity collages. When made, individual collages are called identitygrams and the visual identity data collection method the 'identitygram approach'. The approach was purposefully designed for the research's target group of educationally ambivalent and disadvantaged students. The purpose of designing a visual approach was to overcome the significant barriers this cohort has engaging with research as a process and to provide them with a way of participating that enables authentic data to be collected. This idea of using collages is not new within the psychology domain with art therapy having a long history of asking participants to draw themselves to facilitate self-discovery and disclosure in a therapeutic and client-based setting (Butler-Kisber & Poldma 2010; Case & Dalley, 2014; Linesch, 2013).

Arts-based therapists argue that art therapy techniques are particularly useful for working with adolescents (Barone & Eisner, 2012). These types of approaches assist them in a non-threatening way to work out strategies for dealing with stress and change and expressing their feelings that directly and indirectly help in clarifying their future actions, decisions and behaviours and self-identity. The student participants in the main research attended Tasmanian schools that were below the national mean of socio-economic school status of 1000. The selection of the student participants in the research was not based on individual social and economic circumstances. The researcher excluded students who were already on an alternative program because of significant disruptive behaviour or who were disengaged from learning.

1.10 Orientation to Year 11 and 12 Course

As an integral part of the research, the researcher taught an introductory vocational course, as a brief school-based orientation to Years 11 and 12 and to encourage the students to start to consider their post-school options. Through participation in this course, the

researcher hoped to have the students reflect on their personal assets, the influences on their education participation, and discussion of the future opportunities offered to them through continuing their education participation. The brief orientation program considered how self-identity might work as a resource for adolescent students at an important point in time when they would be making participation decisions as they transitioned between Year 10 generalist study and Year 11 specialist study. Student participants of the orientation course attended schools located in disadvantaged communities. This main research cohort group from the two schools located in disadvantaged communities, though small in number, provided comparative participants and non-participants in the orientation to Year 11 and 12 course.

1.11 The Outline of the Chapters

Chapter 1 is the Introduction and provides an overview of the research questions, the research aims, how the research is conceptualised, the participants, and the research methodology.

Chapter 2 presents the literature review, in particular Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological model and social capital researchers in the context of identity formation.

Chapter 3 is focussed on the issues of education participation and aspirations. Topics included in this chapter are related to how specific social and economic demographics affect adolescent education participation in Tasmania.

Chapter 4 is focussed on the methods used to conduct the research. It provides, firstly, an overview of the pilot study and the use of an identitygram (collage of pictures) to investigate Year 10 students' self-identity. Secondly, it outlines the orientation to the Years 11 and 12 course, developed for the Year 10 students from disadvantaged communities, and the second application of the identitygram procedure with this cohort, along with interview data. The third aspect of the study, the interviews with the teachers of the Year 10 students is

also outlined in this chapter. The NVivo -12 software program was used to analysis the icons and the text data and this is reviewed in this chapter.

In Chapter 5, the findings that pertain to the pilot study that was focussed on students' self-identity are reported.

In Chapter 6 the teacher interview research is the focus. The first issue investigated was what teachers of participating students thought helped and hindered the meaningful participation in education of young people from disadvantaged communities. The second aspect focussed on what policy, actions or resourcing could be implemented to help systemically re-position education participation for youth from disadvantaged communities in Tasmania.

In Chapter 7 the focus is on the brief orientation to Year 11 and 12, five day course for Year 10 students and their reaction to the program and their selection of icons.

Chapter 8 is the discussion chapter where the implications of the findings are reviewed along with limitations of the study and future research directions.

Chapter 2

Continuation of Literature Review

2.1 Socio-Ecological factors and schooling

This chapter extends the literature review started in Chapter 1 but has more of a focus on theoretical aspects linked to students' educational aspirations. In particular, this chapter reviews in more detail the theoretical work of Bronfenbrenner (1977) and to a lesser extent that of Rogoff (2003), Bourdieu (1991), Teese (2007) and Freire (1985, 1986). The over-arching model reviewed is a socio-economic model; that is, the notion that economic disadvantage directly and indirectly influences social behaviour. The socio-economic framework still provides an opportunity for the voice of the participants to be expressed (Fook, 2012). In this case the voices of Year 10 students and their views of progressing on to Year 11 and 12 are captured.

The idea that young people need to attend school right up to Year 12 and achieve specific educational benchmarks at the end of Year 12 is a relatively recent, strategic, economic and social development goal of developed countries (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2012). These countries wish to engage as many young people as possible in education through to the end of their twelfth year of schooling. Endeavours such as these are 'first world problems' because they only relate and are relevant to progress in economically affluent countries. To put this in perspective, the United Nations' Rights of the Child, for example, still articulates primary education as the minimum.

Australia now has followed other European countries and embraced schooling of all young people up to Year 12 as a strategic educational aim and has established national

benchmarks to measure the success of each state and territory in achieving these benchmarks (Council of Australian Governments, 2011). The island state of Tasmania, situated at the bottom of, and isolated geographically from the 'mainland' of Australia, has unique historical, cultural, social and economic education conditions. These conditions have made the meeting of nationally established Year 12 participation and outcome benchmarks difficult for Tasmania, as discussed in Chapter 3.

This research utilised the ecological approach in the review of the literature to assess the influence that different aspects of the education institutional system have on the experience of the individual student. Following this idea and gauging how the system enables or creates barriers to education participation, this research investigated both the individual students' self-perceptions of education and ecological questions about their social and systemic environment. The ecological lens provided the research with a way of investigating the complex and dynamic interaction of individual and systemic factors through the eyes of those experiencing the system: the students and teachers. In keeping with the model and approach, the teacher participants of the research had either personal experience with or an understanding of the systems that operate around and directly influence participation and achievement of students in Tasmania's Year 12 Certificate of Education.

Bronfenbrenner's Model

The study's conceptual framework has adapted Bronfenbrenner's (1979) systemic theoretical model. Bronfenbrenner's five systems are the Microsystem, Mesosystem, Exosystem, Macrosystem and Chronosystem (see Figures 2.1 and 2.2). All five systems influence a young person's educational transition, ranging from proximal influence through direct interaction with others, to the indirect influences of economic, social and political systems. Bronfenbrenner's (1994) model of the interactions between the individual and wider society notes that the individual over time typically adopts and reflects the values and

beliefs of the social environment in which that individual is located. The outermost layer of the model, the Chronosystem, shows that all ecological influences operate over time and therefore across the lifespan.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1992) theoretical model provides a way of demonstrating and reflecting the bi-directional nature of these influences. The ecological framework places emphasis on both the immediate and the broader environment as important influences on education participation. The individual, the school, the educational community, government departments of education and the political and policy climate are co-contributors. These all influence educational development, and therefore the education participation decisions each young person makes. The ecology of stakeholder influence is complex, dynamic and interactive. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1994). The following figures show the socio-ecological model developed by Bronfenbrenner in 1979 and reworked in 1994.

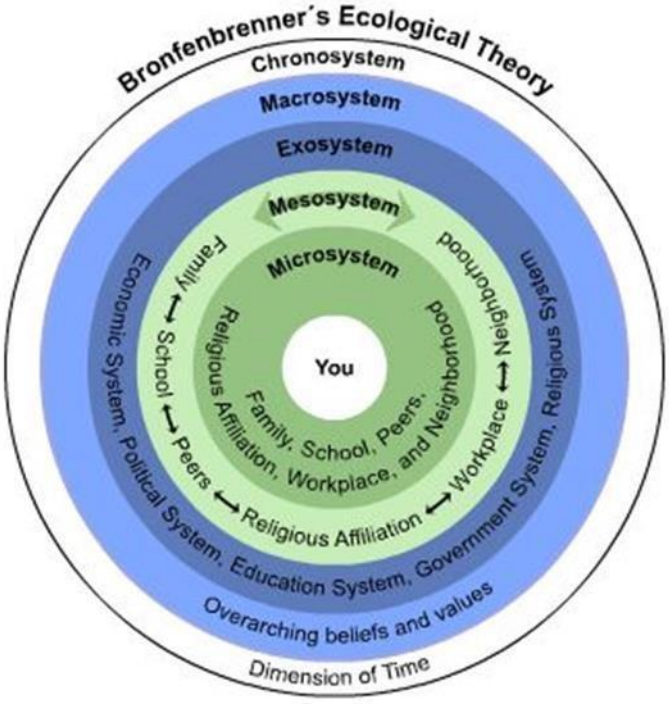


Figure 2.1. Bronfenbrenner's 1979 socio-ecological model.

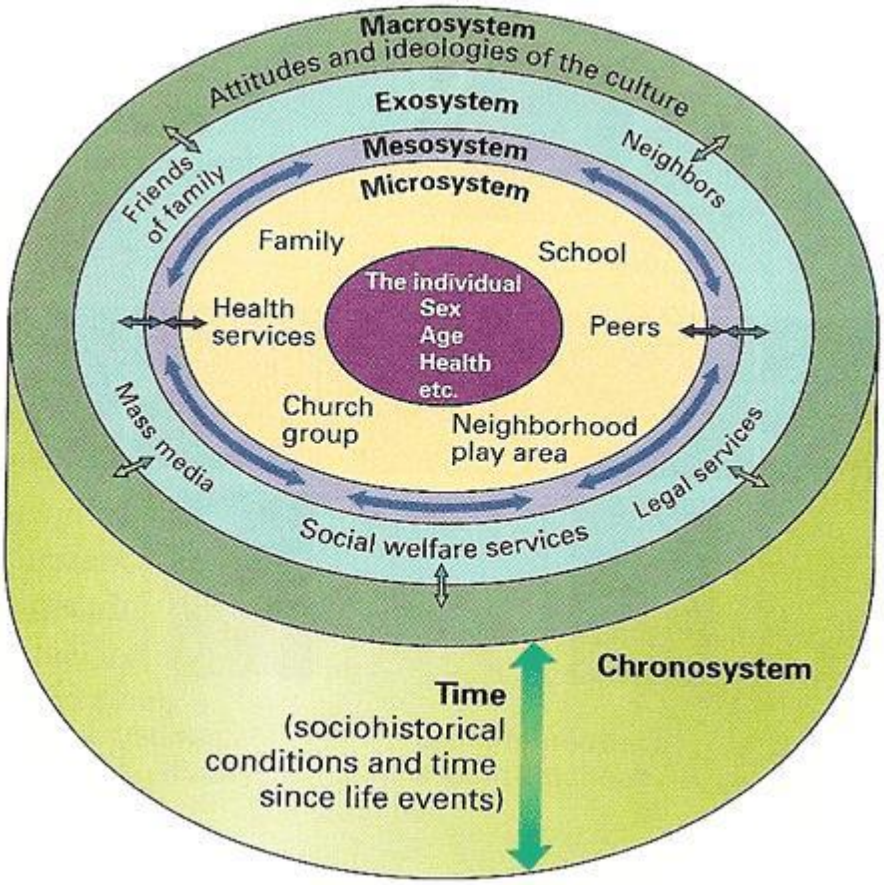


Figure 2.2. Bronfenbrenner's 1994 socio-ecological model.

This researcher in this study used Bronfenbrenner's ecological model to provide a focus on the wider social settings, agents and interaction that influence the formations of a person's beliefs and actions (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994). The microsystem is the social context closest to the individual and from this setting the next sphere of influence is the mesosystem level that includes the extended community. Out from this is the exosystem; the social, political and economic sphere of influence. This operates outside the control of the person but impacts significantly on the person (Mahlo, 2013). The exosystemic sphere comprises complex historical, cultural, social and subcultural factors that influence the curriculum and pedagogical practices. Bronfenbrenner (1994) pointed out that a person's beliefs and self-identity are shaped by the person's social environment and feedback from others. In addition,

these ongoing interactions between the individual and his/her social world are bidirectional (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; Bronfenbrenner, 1994). That is, people's dispositions, aptitudes, behaviours and perceptions are all influenced by their social context over the course of their lives and people can select, create and modify their own experiences (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998).

Rogoff's model

The Bronfenbrenner (1994) theoretical model has increased attention to the contexts in which a person's psychological development occurs. Aligned with this perspective are the work of Rogoff (1990, 1998) and her notion of context and its influence on a person's cognitive and psychological development. Rogoff, in part, utilised Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory of cognitive development; that students' learning occurs as they interact with their more experienced social elders. For Rogoff, however, the contextual host environment is emphasised. The claim by Rogoff is the community and its institutional and cultural practices are influential in forming an identity that is appropriate to the standards, beliefs and practices of that person's host community. That is, an individual's cognitive and psychological development is formed and influenced by social context in which it occurs. This formation is activated by the individual's participation within this social environment. For Rogoff (1989), participation is understood as the individual's active observation of and involvement in his/her communities as guided by the individual's more capable peers and adults. This view of psychological and cognitive development, like Vygotsky's (1978), maintains that an individual's learning occurs as he/she interacts with more knowledgeable others. Rogoff (1998, 2003) also argued that development occurred on three interacting planes of influence. These spheres of influences are: the intrapersonal (i.e. the individual); the interpersonal (interactions among social partners); and the community/institutional (contextual) (Edwards, 2003; Rogoff, 1998). In this, Rogoff shares with Bronfenbrenner

(1994) the notion of a wider circle of influence extending from the near (the home) to the local community and then to the extended macro social context.

Rognoff (1990, 1998) maintained that the individual's ongoing cognitive, psychological and self-identity development were constructors of his/her own knowledge, but reflective of the person's cultural context. This context helps to select and refine what knowledge is valued and assimilated (Rogoff, 1990, 1998). Rogoff's model is considered to encourage the development of a school curriculum that better matches the learning needs and experiences of the individual student and his/her home, social and cultural contexts (Saxe, 2012). In addition, it supports the delivery of a school curriculum that values the individual and his/her social context. This more student-centred approach is in contrast to delivering a standard curriculum that may not necessarily align with the specific needs and aspirations of the individual student and or his/her social context (Fleer, 2002; Saxe, 2012).

Bourdieu's model

Social scientists, such as Pierre Bourdieu (1991) have an interest in self-identity, in particular with the way language and power are implicated in conceptions of the self. For Bourdieu, language was not only a linguistic system of words and sentences, but also a social interaction in which roles, identities and desires were to be negotiated in the context of complex and often unequal social relationships. The argument is, the qualities of the speech that an individual uses, impacts directly and indirectly on the individual's self-concept and cognitive growth (Bourdieu, Passeron & de Saint Martin, 1994). Writing from this perspective, Norton (2013) defined identity as "the way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is structured across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (p. 4). With regards to access to social networks, learners use language to reframe their relationships with others in order to claim more powerful identities. From a Bourdieuan perspective, identity is conceptualised as multi-

faceted, changing, and as a core way of identifying with and gaining 'membership' of a cultural cohort or subgroup (Bourdieu, 1991; Kirkham & Mackey, 2015). Thus language can exclude someone from a group, if that person's accent, vocabulary, use of syntax and expressive interactions do not align with the social and language norms of that cohort. In the context of schooling, middle class formal and standard language is considered to be privileged over students' subculture language (Barkhuizen, 2016). Barkhuizen argued that students who are less able to use the middle class dialogue of classroom instruction in their writing and speaking are more likely to achieve poorer grades in school and have less of an attachment to schooling.

The claim is that the multiplicity of identity formation is linked to how thinking, language, power interactions, motivation and change are connected (Bourdieu, 1991). Motivation to engage in dialogue and in using and extending language is related to the notion of investment (Barkhuizen, 2016; Norton, 2016). The construct of investment has important implications for pedagogy. Norton argued that rather than assuming, for example, that a silent or disengaged student is 'unmotivated', teachers are encouraged to ask, "To what extent is the learner invested in the language and literacy practices of my classroom?" A student may be highly motivated, but if the classroom language practices are perceived by the student as biased in content and/or delivery, the learner has less investment and connection to schooling (Norton, 2013, 2016; Mackey, 2015). Consequently, the student demonstrates less progress in learning in this environment. This identification with the 'culture' of the message (the content) and the messenger (how it is said) can either connect or disconnect the student and the teacher.

The concern is, over time, the message provided by the teacher and others can privilege one group over another, which in turn helps to form the person's self-identity status in society (Barkhuizen, 2016; Bourdieu, 1991). For example, female students over time may

perceive the message and so accept as part of their self-identity that mathematics is for boys. From this self-identity perspective it is acceptable for girls to disengage from higher levels of mathematics and therefore careers related to mathematics (Barkhuizen, 2016). Similarly, students from lower socio-economic home backgrounds may self-identify over time that higher education is for the "smart and higher status people" who speak, dress, and act in a specific way (Bourdieu, 1991). Once students accept this self-identity, their hopes for the future will impact their investment in schooling and the language and literacy practices of a given classroom (Norton 2016).

Teese's model

The notion that all children have the same opportunities has been challenged by Teese (2007, 2013). Teese claimed the structural barriers to greater education participation of those children who come from families with low social and economic capital have persisted despite the wealth of societies. Thus, while rich nations have invested in education, they have left in place many of the structural barriers that maintain social inequity, such as elite schools and universities for the wealthy (Teese, 2007). The issue is governments have encouraged greater overall participation, but they have not necessarily made the qualitative changes needed to reduce major gaps in achievement and opportunity for these in less privileged positions of power and influence. That is, policy makers have kept structures of social differentiation in place and have encouraged, even financed, the efforts of the socially more advantaged families to maintain their privilege and progress new opportunities for their children (Lamb et al., 2004; Teese, 2011).

As Teese (2000, 2007, 2011) pointed out, whilst the structures and systems of education have continued to serve the interests of those who hold social and economic power these structures will not change. They determine and sustain who has social and economic power and status, and who gets to decide the ongoing design and nature of how this power and

status is passed on. This includes how the young are educated, and who is privileged in the design and functioning of the education system. For Teese (2000), one of the most significant reasons why young people leave school was because of negative attitudes schools have towards them, and a lack of interest from the students in what they were being taught. In this, Teese's theoretical perspectives have elements of Freire's (1985, 1986) emancipatory critical pedagogy.

Freire's model

The purpose of Freire's (1985, 1986) emancipatory critical pedagogy is to enrich students' overall life (Giroux, 2005). In such an approach, students are given the chance to challenge others' accepted hypotheses and also to explore the relationship between their society and the content of their educational environment. Through these opportunities provided from critical pedagogy, students can comprehend their position in their society. Teachers can take positive steps to amend their society and ultimately eliminate problems, inequities and oppressions in students' lives (Shim, 2008). The claim is critical pedagogy helps students to be more empowered. This empowerment assists students achieve higher levels of self-awareness, self-actualisation, self-status and self-identity (Freire, 1985, 1986; Shor & Freire, 1987). Dinarvand and Imani (2008) maintained that there are several important principles in Freire-focussed curriculum planning. These include:

(i) Attention to traditional and indigenous contexts of society,

(ii) Teachers' and students' participation in the educational planning,

(iii) Attention to the political position of education in curriculum planning,

(iv) The role of positive cultural diversity in curriculum planning, and

(v) The relationship between curriculum planning and economic production.

In comparison to traditional methods of teaching that typically over time exclude disadvantaged students, critical pedagogy helps students from disadvantaged settings to be more empowered. This is achieved by students engaging with critical thinking-based learning, having meaningful dialogue with their teachers and engaging in cooperative educational experiences (Shim, 2008; Shor & Freire, 1987).

Freire's (1985, 1986) research is linked to the development of the 'social capital' of students from disadvantaged locations. From a social capital model, it is proposed that the experience and meaning of learning and participation in education have the potential to help individuals out of poverty and disadvantage (Cote, 1997; Freire, 1985, 1986; Shim, 2008). The capacity for learning to enlighten creates change through the provision of critical, empowering and respective learning and teaching practices (Freire, 1986; Giroux, 2005). Students exposed to the critical thinking concept of education as a life futures investment can become empowered through exposure to this conceptualisation. Empowering education (Shor, 1992; Shor & Freire, 1987) links pedagogy and social inequity to situate educational disadvantage systemically.

Using this approach, students' social and cultural life and school learning outcomes connect with their community life to make education participation outcomes more personally, socially and culturally relevant (Dinarvand & Imani, 2008; Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie, 2011). Teachers therefore have an important role in making transparent to the student information about the systemic playing field of education participation and how the achievement of educational and skills outcomes become both collectively owned (human capital) and personally owned as education capital (Dinarvand & Imani, 2008; Giroux, 2005). The key to unlocking the potential of conceptualising education as capital for individual students lies in the direct educational interface (Shor, 1992). As 'personal capital', each student's individual education and training experience takes on personal importance as

a resource and gives strategic purpose to education and training participation in terms of relevance, intent and social advancement (Jensen et al., 2011).

2.2 Identity and its measurement

Self-concept and self-identity describe a person's perception of who they think are and in the literature these terms often appear interchangeable (Hattie, 2014). Hattie has argued that self-identity is considered important in education because it has a direct and indirect influence on a person's decision making, levels of motivation and engagement with tasks. Low academic self-identity is associated with students who disengage and reduce their participation in education (Ross, 1966; Wilson, Stemp & McGinty, 2011). Teachers and educators operate from a position of influence by providing the students in their class with feedback and information on their academic and school performance in comparison to the students' peer group. Teachers and parents thus, over time, help craft a narrative about the worth of the student within a schooling context (Hattie, 2014; Marsh, Craven, & McInerney, 2003). This narrative may indirectly work towards reducing the motivation of the students from advancing in their educational pathways because of the students' perceived limitations (Freire, 1986; Shor, 1992; Yoder, 2000). Sociological identity research has broadened the factors that influence identity by stressing the role social environment and the cultural context play in shaping identity (Cote, 1996, 1997; Cote & Levine, 1987; Cote & Schwartz, 2002; Singer, 1995). This has extended into the role the media, including social media, plays in adolescents' self-identity formation (Gauntlett & Holzwarth, 2006).

School experience is considered a critical aspect of the development of students' self-identites during adolescence because this feedback is often public and ongoing (Yoder, 2000). Feedback to adolescents from teachers and peers extends what home provides to children and adolescents. Beyond the curriculum, school thus provides reflective

opportunities and hopefully the climate of psychological safety that enables students to develop a positive and resilient self-identity (Geijsel & Meijers, 2005). This is particularly so for students who live in circumstances of disadvantage (Cote & Levine, 1987). School plays a vitally important role in assisting and supporting all students; however, students living in circumstances of disadvantage need additional support to counter the deficits of disadvantage (OECD, 2012).

In addition to enriching the experiences of students to foster identity development, school also balances and moderates individual and socio-cultural identity when the specific influences of family, cultural or community cohort establish identity in such a way that the identity is not viable outside that community or sub-culture (Schwaebe, 2005). The evidence is that adolescent identity formation is linked to the adolescent's overall psychological well-being and social adjustment (Burrow & Hill, 2011; Hattie, 2000; Myers, Sweeney & Witmer, 2000). Adolescent self-identity is considered a multidimensional construct and involves dimensions such as the physical self, intra-active self, inter-active self, educational self, relationship self and social self (Marsh et al., 2003; Marsh & O'Mara, 2009). Thus, attempts to understand the forming of self-identity share common themes that it is both stable but changeable, influenced by feedback from home, school and community factors, and has a role in motivating a person's actions and behaviours (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Cote, 1996; Cote & Schwartz, 2002; Geijsel & Meijers, 2005; Meeus, 1996). Critically those students who hold high academic self-identity and self-efficacy beliefs and expectancies about their capability to succeed on academic tasks have been found to outperform their less academically self-efficacious peers (Elliot & Dweck, 2005; Hattie, 2014; Marsh & Martin, 2011). Even so, past academic performance is still the best predictor of future academic performance with competence beliefs adding incrementally to the prediction (Alessandri, Vecchione & Caprara, 2015; Valentine, DuBois & Cooper, 2004). The important point is,

given equal levels of academic ability, someone who is more confident in their self-identity of their abilities will be more likely to succeed than someone who doubts their own abilities to cope (Alessandri et al., 2015; Bandura, 1997; Elliot & Dweck, 2005).

Measuring self-identity

Identity formation during adolescence is considered multidimensional, progressive and dynamic (Hay & Ashman, 2018; Klimstra, Hale, Raaijmakers, Branje & Meeus, 2010; Rice, 1981; Shavelson, Hubner & Stanton, 1976). The multidimensional aspect of self-identity has influenced the development of self-identity survey scales. These scales typically use Likert scale survey questionnaires designed to measure adolescent students' self-concept and self-identity. Wouters, Verschueren, Briers and Janssen (2016) maintained that two of the strongest psychometrically reliable and valid self-reporting, self-identity survey questionnaires for adolescents are the SPPA -Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents (Harter, 1988) and the SDQ - Self-Description Questionnaire-II (Marsh, 1992). The dimensions of each of these self-report questionnaires are reported in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1

Dimensions of SPPA and SDQ-II

SPPA	SDQ-II
Physical appearance	Physical appearance
Scholastic competence	General school (and math & verbal)
Athletic competence	Physical abilities
Close friendship	Relationships (same & opposite sex)
Romantic appeal	
Social acceptance	

Although accepting that these standardised and norm referenced self-reporting questionnaires have a place in educational research they have limitations (Alessandri et al., 2015). In particular, self-reporting questionnaires limit the students' thinking of themselves to a basic one-line statement, such as 'I like the way I look', or 'I enjoy mathematics'. The concern is, survey questionnaires represent a narrowing of the construct of self-identity and provide no way to understand why a person has selected a particular response (Zeidner, Roberts & Matthews, 2008). Human thinking, values, and feelings are more complex than what can be measured on a simple questionnaire (Woolfe, Dryden, & Strawbridge, 2003; Zeidner et al., 2008). There are concerns that, for many adolescents, filling out a ten to fifteen-minute self-concept questionnaire is not a meaningful or even an engaging task (Keefer, Holden, & Parker, 2013). Such questionnaires are associated with high incidences of incomplete, inconsistent, exaggerated, and acquiescent responding (Keefer et al., 2013; Soto, John, Gosling & Potter, 2008). Borgers, Hox and Siikkel (2004) have argued that these self-identity questionnaires typically contain unfamiliar words, complex syntax, double negations (i.e., having to disagree with a statement to endorse an item), and have too many response categories. Thus, the surveys are a challenge to the respondents and increase the likelihood of careless, arbitrary, or otherwise invalid responding. Although such questionnaires provide a quick insight into the affect domain of the adolescent, they do not tap into the adolescents' deeper thinking or why or when they have those feelings and attitudes (Zeidner et al., 2008). For this to occur more interview and qualitative approaches need to be considered (Smith & Osborn, 2008).

Interaction of self-identity and disadvantage

In educational psychology, assessing a person's feelings and thinking around self-concept has often occurred within a counselling context, in which the adolescents talk about their feelings and concerns with a counsellor who guides and assists the adolescent to work

towards resolving their concerns (Woolfe, Dryden, & Strawbridge, 2003). In an effort to have the adolescents talk about their self-construct, including feelings, concerns, fears and hopes, counsellors and others have, at times used strategies that have involved the adolescents using arts-based approaches such as drawing themselves and their families and their situations. The young person is asked to explain these art images and pictures that are 'windows' into the adolescents' affective state and thinking (Prosser, 2012; Woolfe et al., 2003).

It is this self-reflective and affect thinking around self-conceptualisation that is of particular interest to this research. Interview techniques therefore have an important place, accessing adolescents' feelings, concerns, fears and hopes, particularly as they relate to their educational attainment (Schwartz, Luyclcx, & Vignoles, 2011; Zyngier & Gale, 2003). This notion that pictures (icons) have a history of prompting students to talk about themselves, influenced the development of a new visual method of approach by the researcher within this thesis. This approach has been called the identitygram approach that encouraged the adolescents to select picture relevant to them and building a collage.

Prosser (2012) maintained that the research methods of collecting data about self-identity need to incorporate more strategies that involve accessing students' feelings, concerns, fears, and hopes without too great a focus on high levels of language or literacy skills. Often 'hard to reach' youth do not engage reliably in traditional methods of data collection because they find it difficult to express into words complex feelings about their interests, concerns, fears, and hopes (Ivey, 2012; Prosser, 2012; Schwartz et al., 2011). On this point Cote (1997) and Bendle (2002) noted that a viable and stable identity, along with a validating community, are important scaffolds to life-long personal well-being.

For many disadvantaged students living in communities of disadvantage, adopting an interest in education and then constructing this as an aspect of identity may not be viable

(The Salvation Army, 2014). Educational achievement, for example, may not be validated at home and may not be valued symbolically within the community. Participation in education, beyond adolescence, may not be an important part of young people's passage to adulthood and independence. The completion of Year 12 may not be a milestone celebrated. In some Tasmanian families and communities, education achievement is not thought of as significant or worthwhile in terms of social status compared to, for example, procreation (The Salvation Army, 2014). For many young people, particularly those living in communities of disadvantage, adolescence is a time when identification with education is challenged (Goss et al., 2016). In particular, Australian research of Goss et al. (2016) highlights the widening gap between how students in disadvantaged settings continue to have difficulties with their educational performance compared to their more economically advantaged peers.

Purposeful teaching of the concept of education as an asset offers the potential to shift preconceived perceptions of how education and learning participation sits as an aspect of identity. A critical and empowering teaching approach can challenge existing understanding of how education acts as capital and creates opportunity for change (Freire, 1986). Critical and anti-oppressive humanitarian teaching practice calls on teachers to teach students why education and training attainment is an asset-based resource in which it is worth them making a personal investment. This approach does not seek to make visible to students the inequities and failings of the system through enacting a pedagogy of oppression (Freire, 1986). Instead, it makes visible to students the opportunities that do exist for them in the education system and works with other stakeholder educators and policy makers to effect changes in the system that improve options and address inequity (Shor, 1992).

Models and measures of identity construct a profile of who we are, whereas measures and models of identity capital construct a profile of what we have the capacity to draw on in the continual process of becoming us. These aspects of identity, when called capital, are

therefore the personal resources accessible to the individual for personal productivity and personal well-being at a particular given point in time. Bauman (1992) provided a valuable acknowledgement of the importance of a point in time reference for measuring identity. When discussing ideas around identity construction in his deliberations on post modernity, Bauman emphasised that a person's identity status has both elements of stability and is it continually active. A measure of identity, therefore, can only be fully accurate for that person at that time. For Bauman, a measure of identity is like a photograph, an ever-changing process in construction.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, it is hypothesised that the viability of particular aspects of identity within particular settings can play a role in either sustaining or restraining education participation. Research by Schwaebe (2005) investigated the relationship between prisoner education program participation and identity viability. The research revealed that if the environmental viability of identity became threatened, this placed external constraints on participation, while also observing the unique role identity viability may play in sustaining tolerance in hostile social and cultural environments.

Prisoner participants of specialist intervention educative programs conducted inside the prison revealed how their attendance disclosed to other prisoners the type of crime they had committed. Other prisoners' knowledge of the nature of the crime committed was found to expose the existence of a pseudo identity, a protective, more environmentally viable identity, established for personal survival. This risk of exposure significantly affected voluntary participation and therefore changed opportunities for those prisoners whose pseudo-identity created a viability that protected their survival (Schwaebe, 2005). Research by Cranston et al. (2014) and Masters (2016) exploring the resistance to educational participation by some young people suggested that such thinking is supported by the students' own families and communities. These types of influences create tension between what is perceived as

important by the student, the school and the home. In particular, Tasmanian research by Cranston et al. (2016) indicated that some disadvantaged Tasmanian communities value education as less relevant than others, and so leaving school early is not identified as a significant impediment to the students' long-term futures.

This work by Cranston et al. (2016) in part links back to the early self-identity work of Erikson (1959, 1971) and his developmental theories on personality and self-identity formation. Erikson identified four key self-identity factors that were linked to personality development: (1) ego strength, (2) ideological commitment, (3) a sense of purpose, and (4) a sense of personal competence. It was claimed by Erikson that these four factors interact and develop for each individual a sense self. Erikson recognised these personality dimensions were formed over time and based on input from others, but once self-identity and personality dimensions were formed, the dimensions were not prone to change quickly.

More recent research confirms the importance of a sense of purpose in adolescent identity formation in relation to well-being. Burrow and Hill (2011) related sense of purpose to positive social adjustment in youth. Their research built on Erikson's (1971) identity factors by describing aspects of identity as self-attributes. Recent research examples that describe aspects of identity as attributes are provided by Myers et al. (2000) and Hattie (2000). Hattie described five self-attributes or core unique attributes of identity: the physical self, intra-active self, interactive self, existential self and social self. For other descriptions of aspects of identity, see the work of Marsh et al. (2003).

Researchers seeking to understand the forming of identity have noted that identity has developmental stages. Thus it is a process rather than a static state, and it is influenced by home, school, and community variables as well as by political, economic, social, cultural and other external life factors (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Cote, 1996; Cote & Schwartz, 2002; Geijsel & Meijers, 2005; Meeus, 1996). Identity studies advance and inform understanding

of how adolescent identity is shaped and influenced in late modern society (Cote 1996), including how contemporary psychological, socioeconomic, technological and cultural influences impact on the development of identity. Identity formation during adolescence is progressive and dynamic (Klimstra et al., 2010) and characterised by significant changes. These changes to identity are categorised and described differently by different researchers (Shavelson et al., 1976).

Narrative research focussing on the development of identity within minority groups such as young people at risk and sub-cultures such as those of gay and lesbian young people (Dong & Blommaert, 2009) confirms the potential of intervention strategies to support and facilitate positive and viable identity development. The programs researched by Dong and Blommaert (2009) used specific targeted intervention strategies to critically deconstruct the narrative of participants' identities. The re-construction or 'thickening' of alternative strengths-based narrative offered the participants increased identity viability. The reconstruction of identity in the research supports notions that identity has the potential to be developed and changed given interpretative alternatives and different identity developmental opportunities.

Identity challenging activities and changes in identity construction (Marcia, 1966) provided by identity discovery learning opportunities and the subsequent integration and alternative reinterpretation of identity were found to have the potential to enable identity status to be modified (Smith, 2011). Smith (2011) maintained that the changes to identity status offered by the educational programs (using interpreting and empowering, critical pedagogical strategies) was an active process. For Smith, education interventions seeking to influence self-identity needed to be age and context relevant to the student. On this point, Klimstra et al. (2010) considered the dynamics of identity formation from three

psychological dimensions; (1) commitment, (2) in-depth exploration, and (3) re-consideration. Each of these reveals greater complexity in these dimensions with maturity.

Similar to Smith (2011), Marcia (1966) noted different factors affected the formation of self-identity. Marcia's (1966) four model self-statuses are: (1) identity diffusion, (2) identity foreclosure, (3) identity moratorium, and (4) identity achievement. The claim is that each identity status has subconscious or conscious identity processing acts of self-exploration followed by commitment. For Marcia the process of exploration and commitment of intent is incorporated within each status model. Identity moratorium status describes the intention to explore identity through the trying of alternatives. The fourth status, that of identity achievement, concludes a period of active exploration, and it is linked a firm commitment is aspect of self-identity. Identity moratorium status in particular is associated with adolescence and described as a potentially anxious and uncertain time in the process of exploration and construction of identity (Cote & Schwartz, 2002; Meeus, 1996).

Educational identity as a sub-concept refers to both the way individuals think of themselves as learners (Moore, 2006). In studies conducted by Moore (2006) using social interactionism, the construction of educational identity is a process that integrates individual identity change perspectives and social change perspectives. Her narrative life-history research captures the experiences of 12 adult students returning to education after disengaging as adolescents. Several important dimensions of educational identity are revealed by Moore's study. First, the respondents' narratives revealed the strong influence of early educational identity perceptions in terms of how the perceived level of capacity or lack of capacity to learn was interpreted, and then integrated into their evolving identity. One respondent described her acquisition of new knowledge with some apparent incredulousness, as "just a fantastic experience, a person like me, a person who thinks she is awfully stupid, can do something" (Moore, 2006, p 158).

Another respondent in Moore's (2006) study revealed their on-going struggle to reconstruct educational identity based on the difficulty they experienced changing their preconceived learning capacities and intellectual ability despite later success. This respondent concluded the attainment of the qualification was due to the way they had applied themselves to learning rather than their changed ability as a learner. It appears, from Moore's findings that the re-interpretation of educational identity after successful educational participation can be a major psychological revelation to students who had not experienced previous educational success. The indications are changing perceptions of educational identity requires challenging preconceived notions across three aspects of identity - psychological, social and cultural (Cote, 1996; Cote & Schwartz, 2002; Meeus, 1996). As Cote (1997) pointed out "what is effective in one context may not be in another" (p. 578). For example, the intangible asset of personality, the psychology of who we are, has the potential to contribute vitality and capacity (Cote, 1997). Conversely, there is also the potential for who we are to be a liability within context, to operate as a hindrance and obstruction to our wellbeing and productivity influenced by, for example, social or cultural norms and expectations. In this way identity capital is not dissimilar to social capital that encapsulates concepts of trust, loyalty, respect, reciprocity, integrity and honesty, which gain social value when given meaning and weight within the social group (Baum & Ziersch, 2003).

Educational identity as an aspect of identity is also described (more specifically) as Academic Self-Concept by Trautwein, Lüdtke, Marsh and Nagy (2009). The two terms, academic self-concept and educational identity, relate to what someone believes in relation to himself or herself as a learner based on the their self-understandings of academic capacities and abilities and self-perceptions of school related skills, knowledge, attributes and disposition. When educational identity changes in a positive direction, it creates more

opportunity to foster and build students' educational capital (Cote, 1997; Trautwein et al., 2009). The indications are adolescence self-identity is an agent that shapes many of the decision this cohort make as adolescents and as adults (Rice, 1981; Schwartz, Arnett, & Cote, 2005). Much of the literature that explores adolescent self-concept revealed adolescence to be a very active stage of identity development and influence educational and behavioural outcomes in adolescence and early adulthood in powerful ways (Marsh & O'Mara, 2009). This study therefore positions identity as one if the foundation of how students make educational participation decisions (Marsh & O'Mara, 2009; Schwartz et al., 2005). When young people make decisions about 'if' to participate in education, they begin by drawing upon their concept of self and their knowledge of what their capabilities are (Shor, 1992).

2.3 Identity and self-expression

Self-reflection for self-knowing can be a challenging, difficult and complex cognitive activity (Klimstra et al., 2010; Marsh & O'Mara, 2009; Schwartz et al., 2005). Conducting identity research requires participants to have some level of self-concept understanding and their personal capacity to relay or project this self-understanding to another (Fraser & Open, 2004; Grinnel & Unrau, 2011; Sheppard, 2004). This interaction with another reflects the notion of partnership in education, working with adolescent students, rather than on adolescent students (Thomas et al., 2018). Partnership in education is linked to Participatory Action Research (PAR) (Fraser & Open, 2004). Participatory methods use approaches that are cyclic in design and reflect the philosophy of participation and inclusion in their design. The importance of linking investigation to practice is reflected within the cycle by processes including both consultation and field trials prior to methodological implementation of techniques and processes (Kirshner, 2010). In this way the understandings, theories or ideas

generated by the research can then influence educational policy and practice. This study sought to adopt many of the principles that underpin PAR research (McTaggart, 1991).

The identity literature draws attention to two key 'conceptual enabling' techniques specifically related to facilitating both research participation and best practice integrity of data processes of identity research with young people experiencing disadvantage. These techniques are 'projecting' and 'visualising'. Projecting is a technical term used to describe approaches and techniques used by researchers to enable participants to externalise or 'project' their feelings and ideas about the research topic (Mahlo, 2013). Projective techniques are well established in both psychological and social work research, particularly when practitioners' research is related to therapeutic work with children and young people. Using projection approaches, the researcher invites the person to look at, or project, the behaviour or event in an objective sense, sometimes in the third party. Projective techniques such as art and play therapy are useful when research explores personally difficult or conceptually difficult or complex subjects, or when the child or young person may feel threatened or anxious about the topic of enquiry (Case & Dalley, 2014; Knowles & Cole, 2008; Mahlo, 2013).

The use of art projection has been used for some time in educational research (Kubacki & Siemieniako, 2011) particularly with young children (Case & Dalley, 2014; Knowles & Cole, 2008). Examples of art projection as a technique can be found used in medical research with children using body shapes (Burgess & Broome, 2012) and market research to explore consumers' perceptions using collage (Kubacki & Siemieniako, 2011). The use of visual projection of identity as a data collection technique provided students with a way of expressing complex ideas without requiring those ideas to be fully articulated orally or in written form. It also helped to reduce students' feelings of threat and anxiety about a topic (Croghan, Griffin, Hunter & Phoenix, 2008).

The capacity of some young person to express their ideas about their identity is affected by their level of personal confidence and their skill in the type or mode of expression (Croghan et al., 2008). Visual modes of communicating identity are particularly familiar to young people. Photos are often used by young people on social media to express who they are and what they are interested in. In an education setting visual modes of teaching and learning, such as YouTube and PowerPoint are used. The use of practical visual demonstrations, web-based tuition, and YouTube activities allow students who are more visual learners more confidence to participate and to expand their learning (Case & Dalley, 2014; Knowles & Cole, 2008). A collage-based approach validates children and young people's creative and aesthetic capacity, rather than their academic capacity. For many adolescents, the use of creative and practical skills and talents is a fundamental way in which they can talk about themselves (Case & Dalley, 2014) and engage and make meaning from their world (Prosser, 2012).

The use of visual media in research with adolescents is still new and under-utilised (Kukkonen & Cooper, 2017). Kukkonen and Cooper (2017) maintained that arts-based therapies and related techniques are under researched. This supports the Knowles and Cole (2008) argument that collage activities help individuals to express complex feelings and emotions. Collage enquiry is part of the broader field of arts-based research, a field of qualitative enquiry spanning such diverse media, such as photo, theatre, sculpture, painting and drawing (Kukkonen & Cooper, 2017; Prosser, 2006). Arts-based research, such as the use of collage in this study, uses the interpretation of the visual text to provide a unique way of exploring educational ideas (Case & Dalley, 2014; Prosser, 2012).

With consideration of and being informed by the literature, the researcher's attention was drawn to visual ways to capture and represent participants' complex individual understanding of themselves. The idea to use collage was of particular interest because of its

potential as a visual art research method that offered a unique and participant-engaging creative approach, an approach that would help in overcoming many of the anticipated barriers to participation. Knowles and Cole (2008) described the potential contribution collage makes to arts-based research as profound. This is because it allows the individual building the collage to be in control and to self-reflect on complex aspect that form their thinking about self-selves (Case, & Dalley, 2014; Butler-Kisber & Poldma, 2010). When creating a collage, as Butler-Kisber and Poldma (2010) pointed out, the visual process transports feelings through chosen images to become product, whereas written forms of art such as poetry and theatre do the opposite, taking ideas and feelings and using the structure of language to compel them to depict feeling (Case & Dalley, 2014; Knowles & Cole, 2008). This results in collage giving objects meaning through the unique visual selection of both conscious and unconscious feelings and ideas.

The researcher investigated other approaches in the literature with similar challenges in facilitating the participation of disadvantaged young people who self-exclude from research. Kubacki and Siemieniako (2011) provided one example in the case of researchers who investigated alcohol consumption among young people. They compared different qualitative methods and concluded that, of the range of qualitative approaches used, it was only collages that "contained sufficient data to facilitate rigorous selection of key issues from marginal ones" (p. 397). The collages produced by the participants of Kubacki and Siemieniako's research provided an insight into the key issues of participants. They concluded that these key issues could not possibly be exposed through alternative methods such as focus groups and personal diaries. Kubacki and Siemieniako described their collage methods as innovative. They found that the data from the collages increased the quality, depth and breadth of data. Attitudes and opinions about the topic as depicted in the collages provided the researchers with real insight into the participants' internal world of values and beliefs. In

this research the concept ‘who you are’ is projected and externalised by the participants’ creation of an identitygram – a term coined by the researcher to describe a collage as a visual depiction using icons. This method provides participants with a way to externalise what are otherwise difficult or complex thoughts, emotions and relationships (Ivey, 2012; Knowles & Cole, 2008).

2.4 Psychosocial and Socio-Economic Factors

Australian young people who are identified as NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) have become an increasing concern to policy makers because of the higher long-term social and welfare costs associated with this cohort (Bynner & Parsons, 2002; Lamb et al., 2015; Yates & Payne, 2006). Yates and Payne (2006) were concerned that the NEET label defines young people by what they are not doing, rather than what systemic change is needed. Yates and Payne argued schools must be meaningful places for students to keep students there. They believed we need to focus attention on what can be done to identify and engage with disenfranchised or ambivalent students before they leave school. Lamb et al. (2015) and Yates and Payne (2006) also maintained that giving equal attention to prevention and early intervention school-based approaches and strategies needs more focus.

The characteristics of the NEET cohort of Australian young people, who have left school to look for work before completing the compulsory level of education, are relevant to this research. According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009), the group of young people called NEET, is more likely to compirse those from: rural and regional geographic areas, economically disadvantage locations; indigenous young people; young women with children to care for, and those who did not complete Year 12 of their education. Looking at the Australian Bureau of Statistics information in more detail, young people living in areas of socio-economic disadvantage were around fifty percent more likely to be ‘not fully

engaged' than young people living in areas not considered disadvantaged. Young people who left education without completing Year 12 make up the largest group of 15 to 24 year olds identified as not fully engaged. Approximately 19 per cent of this cohort who left education before completing Year 12 and who were not working or undertaking vocational training or any other education were identified as being at the highest risk of socio-economic disadvantage. They also made up just under half (47%) of all young people aged 15 to 24 years in Australia who were non-fully engaged in education, training or employment (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2009) pointed out that significant state and territory differences occur which indicate state-based psycho-social, cultural and systemic factors were influencing the data. This indicated to the researcher that closer consideration of data specific to particular geographical areas, regions or states was required before a fuller understanding of the NEET cohort's characteristics could be gained. For example, the rate of participation in education and training was different in different areas for young men compared with young women (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009). These differences have been mainly attributed to the higher likelihood of young men having more opportunities to engage in trade training and young women being carers of children (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010a, 2010b).

Meaningful and future focused participation in senior secondary education requires students to know how to learn and also be provided the opportunity to learn what they find interesting and want to learn (Cranston et al. 2016; Masters, 2016). How students become informed and supported in their education decisions is influenced significantly through how this knowledge is gained via social capital developed through networks located in family and community (Abbott-Chapman, 2015). For vulnerable and disadvantaged students these networks are often limited (Masters, 2016).

The world of work is changing so rapidly that much of what a parent knows about pathways through education to work, and the jobs of the future, may be superseded or irrelevant (Ross, 1966). Where previously critical decisions about transitions and participation were left to students who may have consulted with their parents, it has now become clear this leaves vulnerable the students with a paucity of social and/or cultural capital with consequences for their future (Bynner & Parsons, 2002; Masters, 2016; Thomson, 2005). Access to personal connections, to people with knowledge and information, and the 'know how' for futures planning are not part of many young people's social capital (Thomson, 2005). The research by Bynner and Parsons (2002) indicated strategies in accessing social capital aimed at supplementing socio-economic disadvantage during critical developmental stages can target students who are disadvantaged and improve the quality of their future participation and decision making.

Australian government education research (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2012) indicated that between the ages of 15 and 19, young people make important decisions about continuing study, work and training pathway options. These educational decisions are supported when strategies focus on supporting young people to transition from Year 10 to Years 11 and 12, mindful of the need to ensure educational decisions and choices keep young people engaged through to the point of attainment and completion of an educational outcome (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2012). Some new community initiatives are providing rural young people options to study vocational courses linked to local job opportunities. The reality is that for many students in rural and regional Australia, away from home boarding enables students' access to face-to-face classes. These are, however, costly and present a barrier to students from low socioeconomic families (Abbott-Chapman, Johnston & Jetson, 2015; Homel, Mavisakalyan, Nguyen & Ryan, 2012). If young people stay in their local

communities and try to find work, access to employment is determined by local industry and enterprise (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2012).

An important consideration for this research is how the psychology of achievement promotes school participation through to include Years 11 and 12. This motivation to achieve educationally is significantly influenced by how the learner self-identifies as a learner and their motivation (Sagi et al., 2012). Critical to educational success is that the learner holds positive beliefs about themselves as learners and the learning they engage in (Lingard, Mills & Hayes, 2000; Masters, 2011). When a student holds negative self-beliefs about their capacity to learn, participation in learning is at risk. Poor school outcomes can then become a self-fulfilling prophesy (Anderson, Greve, & Krampen, 2000; Apte, Slattery, & Bonser, 2001). One of the characteristic of early school leavers is their deep subjective ambivalence towards education and avoidance of educational failure (Apte et al., 2001). This group of young people are of particular concern because after leaving school they then go to the edge of the labour market and become marginalised long-term in terms of future participation in the labour force (Illeris, 2006; Lingard et al., 2000).

Willms (2003) investigated student engagement from a social motivational constructivist perspective. From this perspective it is claimed that it is not the student's intellectual ability that is the issue, rather it was the student motivation and interest in the school work that is the reason for the disengagement. Similarly, research conducted by Teese (2000) and Illeris (2006) also concluded that one of the most significant reasons young people leave school was because of negative attitude to and lack of interest in what they were being taught. Illeris also noted that students often disengaged with schooling to maintain their self-respect by avoiding educational failure. Many of the early school leavers interviewed by Illeris described their school experience as boring and not relevant to their needs and social and financial circumstances. Importantly, Illeris concluded that any educational intervention

programs must consider participants' subjective learner identity. Initiatives must avoid any delivery program that could in any way be offensive by way of disrespect or humiliation because this would only confirm existing feelings of incompetence that inform these young people's negative learner identity beliefs. Any educational experience that is perceived as disrespectful will provide participants with a "welcomed excuse to withdraw, easily provided by inhibiting social, practical and financial circumstances" (Illeris, 2006, p. 18). Illeris described this behaviour as identity defence. Klimstra et al. (2010) also maintained that self-identity was a critical factor when considering why students engage or disengage with schooling.

Research on student engagement in the learning process reveals a relationship between educational success and learner engagement (Abbott-Chapman et al., 2013; Willms, 2003). Social, economic and cultural factors affect education performance (Gale & Dinsmore, 2000) and student engagement with school (Finn, 1989). Despite the difficulties of defining the term, 'student engagement' Zyngier and Gale (2003) questioned the benefit of many of the student engagement programs designed to improve retention if the students are withdrawn from their peers and educational pathways. Christenson, Reschly, and Wylie (2012) also questioned this practice arguing for intervention models that promoted early identification, prevention-focussed inclusive programs that retained or quickly returned at risk students to their mainstream classes. Christenson et al. (2012) and Zyngier and Gale (2003) suggested that alternative school programs created a subculture of young people separated from their mainstream student group. This sub-group thus becomes stigmatised and alienated. Rather Christenson et al. (2012) argued that more programs were needed to support and scaffold students to quickly continue within the mainstream classroom educational system, rather than exclude at risk students from mainstream schooling.

Te Riele's (2007) mapping research of 33,000 young people enrolled in 1200 locations across Australia, maintained that the removal of those 'students at risk' of leaving school and placing them in alternative school programs often have the effect of exiting those students from educational pathways. For those high school students at risk in Tasmanian schools, the response was to use flexible learning options and specific grants to partner schools to provide alternative schooling, along with pathway planning and tracking (Te Riele, 2007). Te Riele concluded that the practice of separating students who may be socially connected yet struggling to keep up their schoolwork due to factors unrelated to school or absenteeism and placing them in alternative programs appears at best ineffectual, and at worst alienating and potentially damaging. Such a finding is similar to that of Zyngier and Gale (2003) with both researchers arguing that successful re-engagement programs were associated with high staff-student ratios and small class sizes along with positive power relationships between teachers, support staff and students. Such a statement is also supportive of the accumulated cultural capital theory of Bourdieu (1986, 1991) and the social capital theory of Bynner and Parsons (2002). Although there are concerns about alternative programs, such programs remain a popular strategy in secondary schools around Australia (Thomas et al., 2018).

There are many students having difficulty achieving learning outcomes. Some are having difficulty at home and these students may not necessarily be those who are disengaged from learning. Rather they are coping with a range of emotional issues stemming from issues at home that distract them from focusing on their schooling (Abbott-Chapman, 2015). There are also students who struggle to engage yet are still achieving adequate academic success and their home life circumstances are not disruptive. Then, there is another group of students. This group is the focus of this research. Their attitude to school participation often can present as ambivalence or disinterest in what they are being taught and being asked to learn (Te Riele, 2007). Students disadvantaged by their home

circumstances and their community and school circumstances often can present in this way to their teachers. These students are a group at risk of disengaging and not participating in school after their transition from junior secondary to senior secondary school. Their ambivalence or lack of interest in transitioning is perhaps a symptom of knowing they have not achieved adequate scholastic educational success to continue in many subject areas and they have limited knowledge of their own capacity to participate in a more specialised study program in senior secondary school.

Whilst indicating that alternative programs are not the long-term answer, Zyngier and Gale (2003) maintained that the role of teachers remained central to improving students' level of participation and retention. This finding is supported by the Australian researchers Cranston et al. (2014), Masters (2016) and Thomas et al. (2018). These researchers noted that school programs that were most effective in keeping young people engaged in learning, with their peers, and attending school, were identified as being learning and student centred. That is, they were relevant and connected to the students' world and community. An important characteristic of keeping students participating and engaged is the connection between school and the student. Teachers need to be seen by students as socially supportive and the curriculum or learning outcomes need to respond to the students' needs, both current and looking to the future (Brewer, 1994; Lingard et al., 2000). This psycho-social approach to understanding student engagement sees the interactions between the individual and the teacher as important.

As it has been pointed out, this connection between the student and the teacher also has critical-transformative dimension, if well managed (Alexander, 2001; Rogoff, 2003; Zyngier, 2008). Even when schools encourage students to participate in decision-making and are sensitive to the community culture, that alone does not necessarily translate to a curriculum relevant to all students (Lingard et al., 2000). The need is to engage the students in an

ongoing dialogue about their future options and this process needs to occur over a period of time, so they can make informed decisions (Cranston et al., 2014; Lingard et al., 2000).

2.5 Improving Student Education Participation

Improving student engagement and participation in education requires some adjustment of schools to enable teachers to become more effective (Willms, 2003) and some re-design of teaching strategies to make learning more interesting to the students (Zyngier, 2008). Successful educational outcomes for a diversity of students are linked to student-centred teaching and curriculum approaches that engage dialogue and feedback to occur between the student and the teacher (Hattie, 2000, 2016).

Schools operate within a social context that operates within a set of culturally defined values (Lingard et al., 2000; Rogoff, 2003). The social cultural knowledge of the community and of the students living in community provides critical information about what types of knowledge, values, and skills are considered more meaningful (Anderson-Butcher, Stetler, & Midle, 2006). Student engagement strategies for students from disadvantage communities often have to bridge the tensions between the values of the school curriculum and what is possible with more limited home and community resources (Alexander, 2001; Rogoff, 2003; Zyngier, 2008).

Chapter 3

The Schooling Context

3.1 The Human and Social Capital Agenda

Chapter 3 locates decision-making about education and education participation at the time of transition between Years 10 and 11 in an environmental context. The discussion provides a political, social, cultural and economic context and examines the challenges Tasmania faces in improving disadvantaged students' education participation. The first section of this chapter considers the Tasmanian social, political and cultural exosystemic context that promotes education through to Year 12 in Australia.

Tasmania's rural and regional composition and scattered population has been the justification for past Tasmanian governments' funding of separate senior secondary education campuses; having more students complete Year 12 in Tasmania is still a challenge (Cranston et al., 2016). There are economic and social advantages to the individual and the community for higher Year 12 completions (Baumol & Blinder, 2012). In particular, the social and economic benefits of having citizens who are healthier and well because they are engaged in work are evident (OECD, 2001). International comparisons of the quality and capacity of labour forces has taken the form of comparisons of employability skills, the training of workers and the authenticity of the qualifications that equip the work force (OECD, 1998).

Higher educational outcomes for a country are associated with more connected communities as are higher health and wellness measures and less crime (Lin, 2000). These factors are also associated with increased community cultural and social capital (Kenny, 1996; Lin, 2000; OECD, 2001, 2012); examples include higher rates of volunteering,

increasing youth social educational, and recreational participation (OECD, 2012; Semo & Karmel 2011) and social community bonding (Scott & Thomas, 2009; Szreter, 2002). Thus an ongoing investment in enhancing students' level of social and economic capital needs to be core purpose of education, particularly for those students from disadvantaged communities (Bourdieu, 1986; Bunar & Ambrose, 2016; Luet, 2017). Schools have a role to prepare all their students for the world of work and to be positive members of the society those students will inhabit as adults (OECD, 2001, 2012; Woodman & Wyn, 2015).

3.2 Post Schooling

Secondary education needs to be considered as one of the main pathways to post-compulsory education and training and as an entry point into formal vocation qualifications (The Australian Qualifications Framework, AQF, 2013; Coles & Werquin, 2007). Vocational education in senior secondary schools is recognised as a pathway to post-compulsory education (AQF, 2013). Historically, senior secondary schools were primarily concerned with preparing students for university studies but that is changing and the VET pathway now is also a focus (Malley, Keating, Robinson, & Hawke, 2001). Years 11 and 12 in Tasmania currently sit in the AQF framework at Level II in Year 11 leading to Level III in Year 12. In Year 12, students who gain a VET Level III qualification, exit with an equivalent Year 12 outcome. They also have a very viable option for continuation of pre-vocational training at Level IV then Level V at TAFE or a private Recognised Training Organisation (RTO). This pathway to training in vocational education then leads to work or articulates through to a University pathway (AQF, 2013).

Preparing for the word of work

Technology and the world of work are changing which has consequences for society and schooling (Bradley et al., 2008). Schools have always prepared students for work, but

schools now need to prepare students to meet the demands in a quickly changing workplace (Education Services Australia, 2014). The proportion of low-skilled entry-level jobs is falling. Increasingly, employers are looking for skilled and flexible workers who can navigate the world of work, interact with others, plan and organise, make decisions, identify and solve problems, create and innovate, and work in a digital world. In addition, many employers expect school leavers to have already had some practical experience, enabling them quickly to become productive in a new job (Education Services Australia, 2014). Higher education attainment of a population is claimed to be a valuable resource commodity upon which to build long-term national wealth (OECD, 2012). In addition, higher education attainment provides for a more equitable, cohesive and just society (Swan, 2010). The Council of Australian Governments (2011) maintained that there are long-term economic and social benefits for the person and for society linked to higher education attainment levels. Accessing those benefits requires higher senior secondary education participation rates, with Tasmania below the national average in terms of Year 12 school completions (Bradley et al., 2008; Skills Australia, 2011). Yet changing the funding arrangements of the Australian education system to maximise opportunities to enhance all students' potential is a challenge (Bradley et al., 2008). Gonski et al. (2011) in his report to the Australian government reviewing funding arrangements for schooling, noted the importance of schools in fostering individuals to gain benefits from participation in society. Yet his report also warned that the declining educational performance of Australia was linked to the inequity in funding human and capital resources to support students who are disadvantaged. The review noted:

> [There is] a significant gap between its highest and lowest performing students. This performance gap is far greater in Australia than in many OECD countries, particularly those with high per forming schooling systems. A concerning proportion of Australia's lowest performing students are not meeting minimum

> standards of achievement. There is also an unacceptable link between low levels of achievement and educational disadvantage, particularly among students from low socioeconomic and indigenous backgrounds. (Gonski et al., 2011, p. xiii)

Under the National Partnership on Youth Attainment and Transitions a range of transition and retention strategies have been adopted to assist young people in Australia to stay in secondary school or take up formal job training. The senior secondary school transition and retention strategies strengthen youth training participation opportunities and provide support to enable disadvantaged young people to take up those training opportunities (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2012). Thus, higher educational attainment is considered a critical element of human economic and social capital growth. The claim is higher rates of education and vocational training will contribute to enhancing national productivity but also the social and psychological wellness of individuals across society (Education Services Australia, 2014, p. 97).

3.3 Tasmanian context

In 2010, in response to the national Smarter Schools partnership program, the Australian and Tasmanian governments brought together all Tasmanian government and non-government schools to develop the *Learner at the Centre Education and Skills Tasmania 2009-2012* strategic plan. This plan informed the development of the Retention and Attainment Strategy Years 10-12 and subsequent and current Student Engagement and Retention Policy (Department of Education Tasmania, 2016). These policies focused on the engagement, retention and transition, with one in four young Tasmanians leaving formal education before completing Year 12. Despite these policies, Tasmania continues to have difficulty successfully transitioning students into senior secondary school and retaining students to Year 12 and beyond (Maree, 2018). The later parts of this chapter examine the

complex geographical, historical, social and cultural conditions and context of education participation in senior secondary education in Tasmania. The claim explored is the notion that social and economic environmental conditions present significant challenges to students from disadvantaged communities.

The research reported in this thesis, was conducted in Tasmania, an island state of Australia with a small population of a little over half a million people (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014). Tasmania's geography and history has shaped, and still defines, the identity of Tasmanians. Its isolation as an island affects the cost of living, travel and transport. The geography of Tasmania as an island and some harsh climatic conditions, particularly on the south and west coasts have influenced the dispersion of the island's population. The areas of the south and west coasts of Tasmania have but a few townships. One third of Tasmania is mainly wilderness and is inaccessible by road. The southwest world heritage area makes up one fifth of the state. Its separation from the mainland of Australia has had both positive and negative effects on social and economic development. Traditional industries, particularly forestry and energy-intensive manufacturing based on hydro-electricity are in decline. The last ten years has seen exponential growth in the tourism and the community service sectors (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009). This increase in visitors has offered some young people part time employment opportunities (Maree, 2018).

Tasmania has approximately one hundred small communities with populations of less than 1,000. Nearly half of the Tasmanian population congregates in or near Hobart in the southeast corner of Tasmania. Greater Hobart includes three large outer urban population centres, Kingston, Clarence and Glenorchy (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). Only four population centres outside of greater Hobart have more than 10,000 people - Launceston, Devonport, Burnie and Ulverstone, which are located in the north and north west of the state.

Being an island has influenced the homogenous make-up of the Tasmanian population. Tasmania has comparatively the lowest state-by-state proportion of people born overseas. Relatively few of Australia's annual half million humanitarian and economic immigrants and refugees come to live in Tasmania (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014). An estimated 65 per cent of the population is descendant from mid-19th century residents and 4 per cent identify as indigenous (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2014). Like 'mainland' Aboriginal people, the Aboriginal people of Tasmania also experience significantly lower standards of health, education, employment and housing and are over-represented statistically in systemic responses to such social issues as domestic and family violence, child protection and criminal and youth justice (Holland, 2016). Of all the Australian states, Tasmania has the highest comparative state-by-state proportion of its population depending on government pensions and allowances. Australian Bureau of Statistics household and income distribution data (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009) indicated that in 2009 32.8 per cent of Tasmanians rely on government benefits to provide for more than 50 per cent of their household income (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009). Of these, just over 21 per cent rely on government benefits almost completely (over 90% of the household income). In addition, Tasmania's mean disposable household weekly income was 17 per cent below that of the national average (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009). Tasmanians were more likely to assess their health as fair or poor (21.5%) than people aged over 18 years living elsewhere in Australia (18.7%) (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). Economically and socially, the people of Tasmania experience significantly lower standards of health, education, employment and housing than other Australians, and Tasmanian Aboriginal people, are overrepresented in systemic responses to a range of social issues.

As previously discussed, Tasmanian demographic data shows a dispersed rural population. Approximately 27 per cent of the population live outside the three major urban

areas of Hobart in the south, Launceston in the north and the two close townships of Burnie/Devonport on the north west coast (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008). In the 1970s, the Tasmanian Department of Education established eight senior secondary schools (providing Year 11 and 12) in the three major population areas (Phillips, 1985). Up until around 2000, these 'colleges' focused on pre-tertiary education. This focus has changed significantly over the last ten years and 'colleges' now provide a range of foundation, preparation, vocational, and pre-tertiary study options. The human resourcing of these schools is still primarily focussed towards academic study options. Tasmanian

Year 11 and 12 colleges are all located near feeder Year 7 to 10 schools called 'high schools' (when located in urban areas) (Department of Education Tasmania, 2013). Up until recently, Year 11 and 12 senior secondary schools operated separately to urban 7-10 high schools. The Year 11 and 12 colleges have what could be described as a late adolescent learning culture. This culture provides the mainly 16- to 20-year-old students with a significantly different school and learning experience from the environment of a Years 7-10 high school. At the time of writing, Tasmanian Year 11 and 12 schools were called colleges on the Education Department's website and Year 7–10 schools high schools (Department of Education Tasmania, 2016). Please see Figure 3.1 below for college (separate Year 11 and 12 schools) locations.

Figure 3.1. Location of the eight Tasmanian 'colleges'.

Retention rates

Strategic endeavours by successive Tasmanian governments have struggled to engage young people meaningfully in senior secondary school through to the attainment of a Year 12 outcome. The attitude in many Tasmanian homes has been that Year 10 is the exiting point for students' schooling (The Salvation Army 2014). To counter this attitude, new education legislation put before parliament requires students to remain at school until aged 18 (Education Department of Tasmania, 2016). It remains to be realised if this legislative response has the effect intended. Many students, particularly those from disadvantaged communities who are already required to attend school under the existing legislation, utilise exemption clauses to legitimately choose 'allowable' alternatives to attending senior secondary school for Years 11 and 12. At the time of writing, Tasmania's rates of

participation and achievement in post-compulsory education and training are lower than most other Australian States and OECD countries (OECD, 2012). In 2009 across all OECD countries, an average of approximately 46 per cent of the population aged between 15 and 19 years were still in education, 39 per cent were in employment, and 15 per cent were not engaged in education, training or employment. In comparison, the number of Tasmanian young people aged 15-19 not engaged in education, training or employment fluctuates around 26 per cent (OECD, 2017).

In response to the need to provide rural young people with accessible vocational training opportunities after completing Year 10 studies and also to meet local industry demand (Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations, 2012), a small number of Commonwealth funded Trade Training Centres (TTCs) are located in non-urban areas around the state.

The Tasmanian Government has sort to enhance Year 11 and 12 retention rates by reducing the need for students from small towns to attend senior colleges in the large regional towns. The separation of Years 7-10 schools from Years 11-12 campuses and the lack of local access to Years 11 and 12 classes for students in rural communities were the highlighted problems for senior secondary school retention. Strategies aimed at strategically extending rural and outlying Tasmanian government schools up Year 12 commenced. The policy is to make all public secondary schools in Tasmania provide students with study programs up to Year 12. At the time of writing, the impact of this policy on the education participation rates of Tasmanian young people in Years 11 and 12 is still qualitatively unknown.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1 Introduction to the Method

This chapter outlines the methods used in this study.

4.2 Research Sample of Students and Teachers

Twenty-two Year 10 students from three different Tasmanian urban high schools participated in the study. Eight of the twenty-two students took part in the pilot study investigating the use of a visual collage called an identitygram to encourage students to talk about their self-identity and schooling aspirations (see Appendix A). How each student responded to the picture icons presented was recorded and examples of these collages are presented in the following chapter. Following the pilot study, a different 14 students took part in the main study. These Year 10 students were all attending low socio-economic status schools as measured by My School Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) scale (ACARA, 2013). Based on the information provided by the Year 10 coordinating teachers, these particular students were unsure of their future long-term education plans and were ambivalent about their subject choices for Year 11 studies and plans for Years 11 and 12. The teacher interviews aspect of the study focussed attention on the education barriers and difficulties faced by urban disadvantaged students (see Appendix F). The individual teacher and small focus group interviews each took between one hour and two hours. All the teacher participants were employees of the Tasmanian Education Department.

This study is focussed on four issues: first, the self-beliefs of Year 10 Tasmanian students preparing to transition into Year 11 and 12 on a new campus; second, the use of icons as a under researched method of engaging students to talk and reflect on their schooling aspirations and self-identity; third, if a brief orientation to Year 11 and 12 influenced students self-identity and students' reactions to this program; and finally teachers' perception of the issues Year 10 students from disadvantaged communities experience when transitioning into Year 11 and 12. The stages of the research are mapped in Table 4.1, next to the relevant Bronfenbrenner (1977, 1979, 1992) ecological spheres.

Table 4.1

Participants' Ecological Spheres and Activities

Participants	Ecological Spheres	Description of Activities and Data collection
Students	Identity Microsystemic	Pilot Study: Developing, constructing and trialling the identitygram kit and identitygram approach
	Identity Microsystemic	Main Study: Student identitygrams are collected, 1st occasion
	Mesosystemic	The education orientation to Years 11 and 12 course conducted over five days.
	Identity Microsystemic	The student identitygrams are collected, 2nd occasion as part of main study
	Mesosystemic	Student feedback: Brief survey questions gathered on the value of the Years 11 and 12 orientation course.
Teachers	Micro, Meso and Exosystemic	Interviews with teachers about the Year 10 students and their transition into senior schooling

The students' identitygram collage making, and the interviews are outlined in more detail in Appendix J.

4.3 The Visual Data Collection Technique

Identitygram is the name given to the collage of icons made by the participant. Each participant had a pool of eighty visual icons from which to select. These eighty pictures (icons) were 'copyright free' for use from the internet and selected by the researcher as relevant for consideration in an investigation of adolescents and their interests and schooling. The rationale and justification for use of a visual approach to investigate change to the student participants' educational identity, was discussed previously in the literature review. In summary, four dominant design principles emerged from the literature consistent with the focus and intent of this research: (1) research method participation equity, (2) adolescent appropriate methodology, (3) externalisation projection of identity and (4) a creative approach to aid the revealing of values and attitudes.

4.4 Pilot study and 'Identitygram' Approach

4.4.1 Introduction to the Pilot

As a previously untested approach, the identitygram required a pilot study to investigate the suitability of the instrument and the technique. Its suitability is related to its validity, its fit for purpose' (Kirk & Miller, 1986). From this perspective, the purpose was to engage adolescent students to review and reflect on their aspirations, limitations and concerns using a method of data collection that was less reliant on written forms of assessment. A method and an assessment instrument are considered to be more appropriate if it is able to be replicated and repeated with similar outcomes (Charmaz, 2014). Kirk and Miller (1986) identified three types of suitability and reliability information related to the

research process. These three types of information are: (1) the degree to which a measurement outcome collected repeatedly with the same measure remains the same, (2) the stability of a measurement over time, and (3) the similarity of measurements within a given time period. Miles and Huberman (1994) pointed out another aspect of suitability and reliability related to the human aspect of consistency in addition to the following four characteristics of an effective social researcher. These characterises are: (1) the investigator's familiarity with the subject or phenomenon and the setting of the study, (2) the researcher's solid and enduring interest in the topic of the research, (3) the researcher's capacity to create a perspective of sceptical distance, and (4) the researcher's 'dogged' investigative skills. These aspects were all considered in the design of this study. In addition, in response to the possibility of data bias (Charmaz, 2014) a research assistant was involved in collecting the student data.

In the following section, this methodology chapter details the use of NVivo -version 12 software as Computer Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) program to analyses the interview and icon data. As stated by the developers, NVivo -12 (2016) is a qualitative data analysis computer software package produced by QSR International. It has been designed for qualitative researchers working with very rich text-based and/or multimedia information, where deep levels of analysis on small or large volumes of data are required. The NVivo software enables the researcher to store, organise and analyse both text and visual data (Marian, 2011) so making it an appropriate analysis procedure in this research study.

4.4.2 Participants

Participants in the pilot study were Year 10 students attending an urban non-government secondary school in Tasmania. The primary purpose of the pilot was to test the

reliability of the identitygram method. Twelve students and their parent/guardians returned the consent forms to participate in the pilot. Ten students participated in the data collection activities on the first occasion and two were absent or participating in outside school activities on the second occasion the researcher visited the school to collect the data. Five male and three female students were participants of the pilot.

The researcher negotiated the involvement of a non-government secondary school via email with the school principal. Email exchanges negotiated the timeframes for the research to take place and the school office provided 110 student information and permission kits, in separate sealed envelopes, distributed to all the Year 10 students in their homeroom class (Appendix A). Initially none of these returned. A follow-up the following week resulted in 12 of the 110 students returning their parental and student permission forms. These 12 students were advised by letter of the day and time of the two visits, one week apart, when the researcher was to come to the school. The students were also reminded of the time of the researcher's visits in their homeroom on the morning of each of these visits. The data collection procedure took place in the open access space in the library, closed for this purpose. The students made their identitygram collages at the same time but sitting at least six to eight feet from each other and facing away from each other. In this way, the students worked individually without disruption. Additional information about this procedure is provided in Appendix G. Interestingly, none of the students appeared interested in commenting on, disrupting or in any way sabotaging the work of another student while they made their collages. All the students appeared completely self-absorbed by what they were doing and making about themselves.

4.4.3 Identitygram Procedure

Each participant completed the research activities individually. The two collages per student took approximately 30 minutes in total to complete on each occasion. Each participant was given an A3 sized piece of paper printed with a large circle. The research assistant then read the script (see Appendix G). The participant wrote their name in the centre of the circle of A3 paper. Participants then selected icons depicting things they like and value to represent items and people important to them from the group provided (see Appendix H). On each occasion, participants were asked to create two identitygrams to depict their identity, one depicting their identity NOW and one forecasting three years into the FUTURE. Each participant created four identitygrams over two occasions. The analysis compared NOW with NOW and FUTURE with FUTURE to test the reliability of the technique.

The identitygram data were collected using the same approach twice with one week's break between the first and second occasion. Although self-identity is regarded as a stable variable, formed over a period of time, there is some mutability associated with it as a construct (Hattie, 2014). From this perspective, the identitygrams developed by the students were considered stable if there was 80 per cent co-occurrence of icons after a short interval.

4.4.4 Data Storage and Coding Procedure

Eight participants completed identitygrams on both the first and second occasions. These sixteen 'my identity now' identitygram collages were scanned and stored in NVivo as sources. Each identitygram was opened, viewed and NVivo coded. Each icon was given a descriptive name by the researcher and referenced by source code. An example of the source reference for Participant 2, Figure 4.1, is as follows in the identitygram label: Participant 2, PIL: Pilot study, code-named JETH. This is the participant's identitygram made on the 2nd

occasion and is the student's NOW depiction. This and subsequent screen shots of like origin are considered figures not tables.

Figure 4.1. Pilot Study 'NOW' Identitygram by JETH.

Table 4.2

Icons in JETH's NOW Identitygram on the 2nd Occasion

	Icon Name
1	You tube
2	Tree
3	Laptop
4	Still camera
5	Film camera
6	Education books with graduate hat
7	The world from space
8	Pile of three books
9	Hot chips
10	Beach umbrella
11	Guitar
12	Music keyboard
13	Car
14	Speakers
15	Pizza
16	Hamburger
17	Money
18	Mobile phone
19	Credit cards
20	Television screen
21	Microscope

4.4.5 Coding for the Icons using NVivo

When working with the pilot research identitygram data to test reliability, several key NVivo coding procedures applied:

- When checking the reliability of identitygrams as a visual text method, the principle of polysemicity was applied in that there may have been a range of possible meanings depicted in the collages. It was not necessary to check these meanings with participants to test reliability.

- When testing the reliability of identitygrams, the icons only exist as objects. They have a descriptive name, but this name may not represent individual participant's interpretative meaning.
- Identitygrams are generated both by the influence of the researcher creating the identitygram icon kit and by the participant creating the identitygram.
- Coding and analysis of the pilot identitygrams to test reliability.

A 'parent' node was created for each participant. Two 'child' nodes were then created for each participant parent node; one for the first occasion identitygram and one for the second occasion identitygram. The icons were then coded against the child nodes as per use by the participant in their first and subsequent second identitygram collage one week later. A screen shot is provided, Figure 3, of participant second NOW child node references. The participant in the example above used 21 icons to represent their identity on the second occasion. By opening both the source and the coding tabs for each tab next to each other, the coding checked accuracy. If the coding was accurate, each icon in the source should also appear as a reference. Nodes were linked back to their source by clicking on the title seen when in the reference view (tab on the left-hand side of the window). A node was created for each participant. Icon references transferred to each participant node. Participants 1 and 5 did not participate on the second occasion so their first occasion data was not imported for reliability analysis.

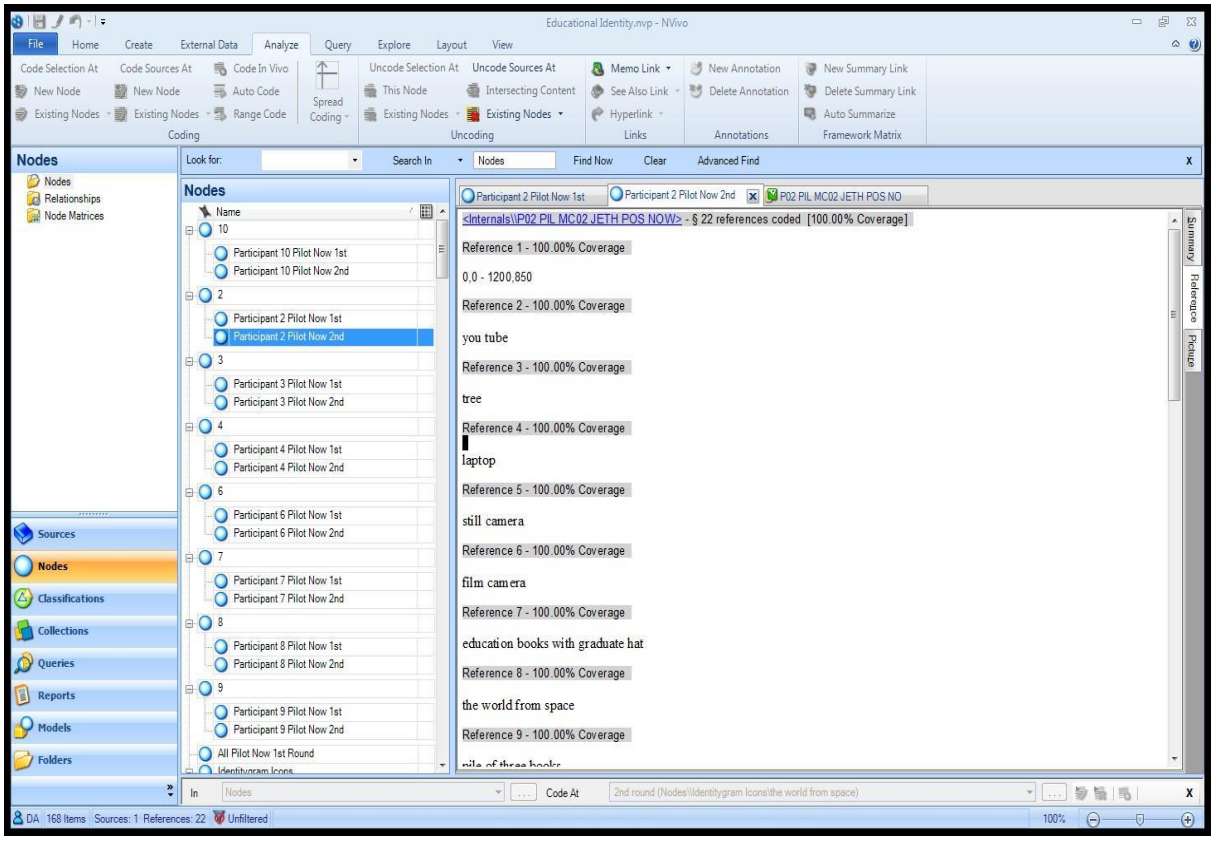


Figure 4.2. Participant 02 second NOW child nodes.

Two nodes were created for each icon, one for first occasion use and one for second occasion use. The source for each icon was then coded at each of these nodes. This process sorted the data both for analysis and for an important check of coding accuracy. An accuracy of coding check of the source references was made by checking the coding origin in a PRE (first occasion) collage and POS (second occasion) collage for consistency. An accurate parent icon node should only contain references with PRE in the title and the child icon node should only contain references with POS in the title. The two screen shots following, demonstrate coding for ‘a pile of three books’ icon. The first screen shot, Figure 4.3, demonstrates a coding check for participants’ use of the icon ‘pile of three books’ PRE (first occasion).

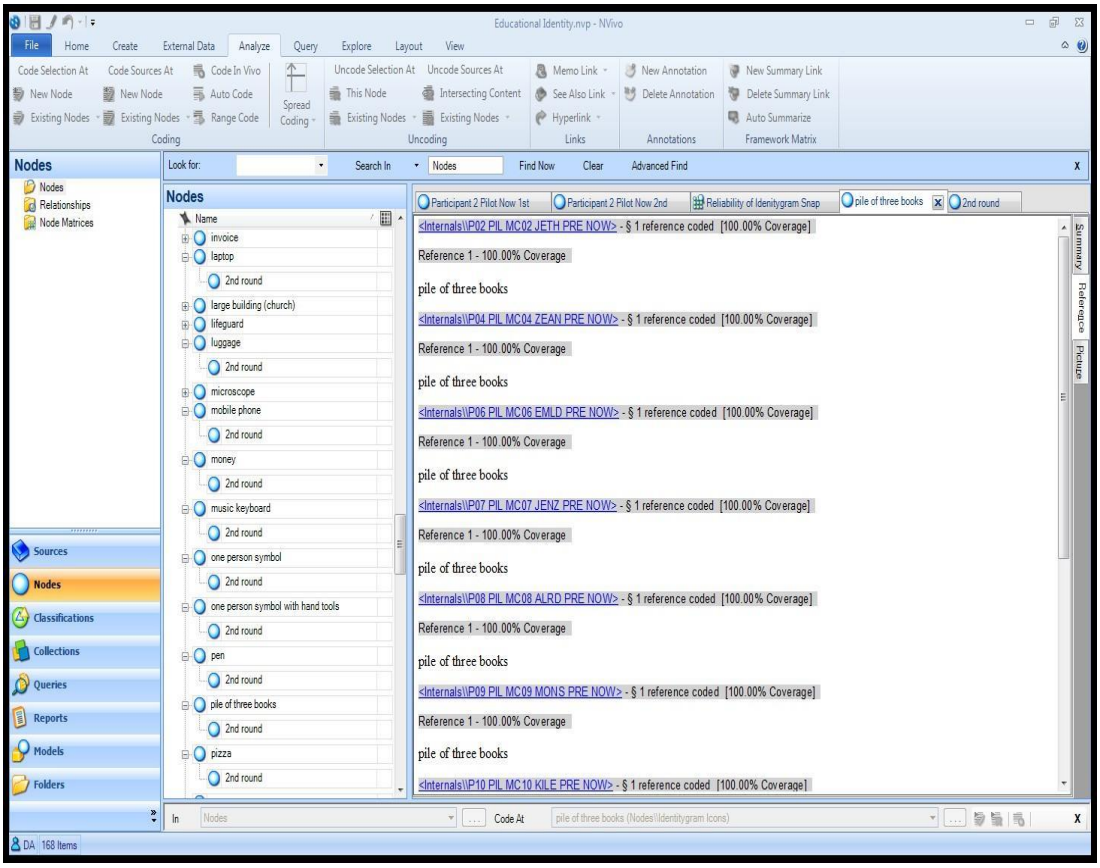


Figure 4.3. Example coding use of the icon ‘pile of three books’.

Figure 4.4 demonstrates the coding check for Participant 2’s use of the icon ‘pile of three books’ POS (2nd occasion).

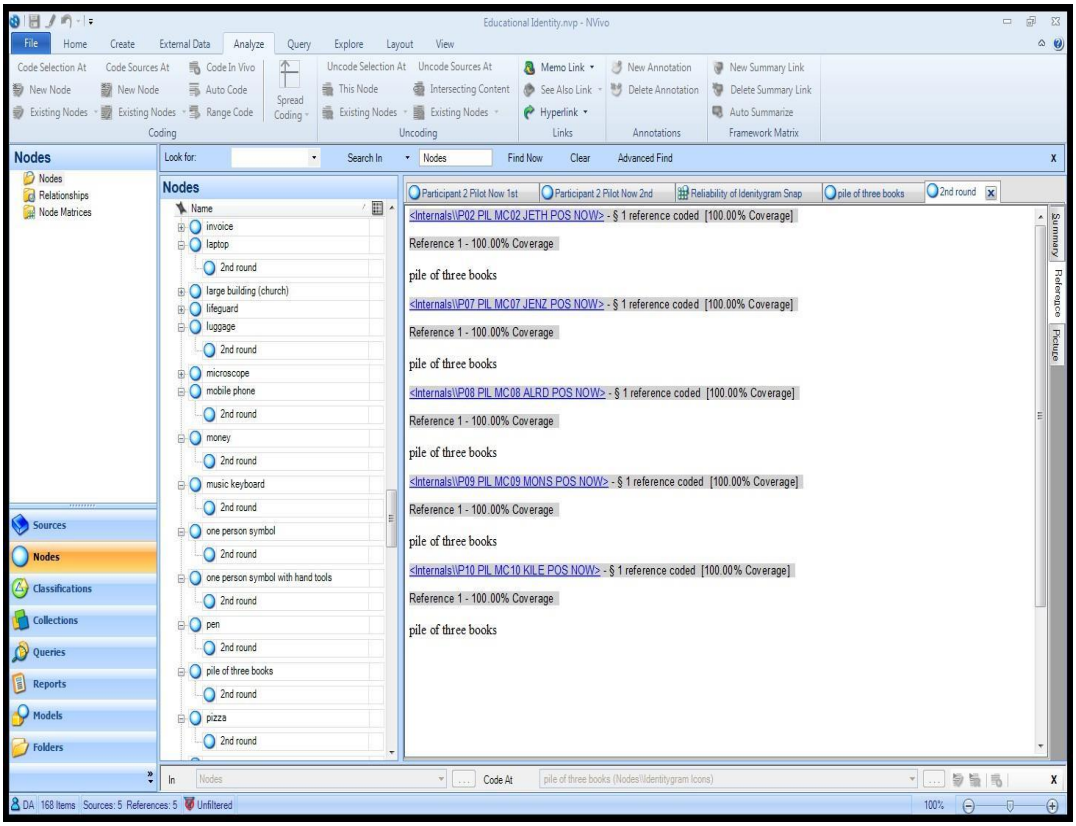


Figure 4.4. Coding check second use of the icon ‘pile of three books’.

4.4.6 Data Analysis for Reliability

To test the reliability of an identitygram as a method using NVivo -12 (2016) as the Computer-assisted (or aided) qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), one major matrix coding enquiry and two minor coding enquiries were conducted. The major matrix enquiry conducted an analysis of the 60 icon nodes. The source collages were coded by first occasion use and second occasion use. A matrix enquiry of first occasion and second occasion use of each icon by participant was exported into Excel and a formula applied to the Excel spreadsheet to check how consistently participants used the icons.

Table 4.3

NVivo Matching for Reliability of Use of Icons

	1st occasion	2nd occasion	Number of icons that matched on 1st occasion and 2nd occasion
Participant 1	34	21	21
Participant 2	11	11	10
Participant 3	19	20	18
Participant 4	22	21	19
Participant 5	15	18	13
Participant 6	14	13	10
Participant 7	20	23	20
Participant 8	12	13	10

The analyses of the individual nodes of data transferred to Excel applied the formula for comparison of use (reliability test). This analysis showed consistent use of the same icons by participants to depict aspects of identity on both the first occasion and second occasion, one week later. This consistency was across all eight students who participated on both the first and second occasion. The level of consistency of selecting the same icons by the same students a week apart was demonstrated to be 84.4 per cent. This suggested that the students were maintaining a consistent and stable self-identity as identified by their icon selection. This indication of reliability for this period was important to the continuation of the research using the identitygram approach for the main study. Reliability of the approach with the approximately one-week period allowed the researcher to test if an experience provided in that week window might influence or change the participants' depictions of identity.

The matrix provided on the following pages shows each of the 58 icons used by the students in the pilot study. The table shows which participants used which icons and how consistently they used them on the first and second occasion they made their NOW identitygram collages. Participants 1 and 5 do not appear in the matrix because they did not return to participate on the second occasion. Each participant was given a different colour code. Where the colour appears in the table next to each other under the icon, the participant used the icon on the first and second occasion in their NOW identitygrams. The matrix is shown in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4

Reliability Matrix of NOW Depictions by Pilot Study Student Participants on the 1st and 2nd Occasions

		DOG 		STILL CAMERA 		RINGS 		HETRO 		TWO HEARTS 		THONGS 		BEACH UMBRELLA 	
Occasion Depicted		1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
P2				1	1									1	1
P3		1		1	1										
P4				1	1							1	1	1	1
P6						1	1	1	1	1	1				
P7															
P8		1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
P9										1	1	1	1	1	1
P10									1	1	1				

	FACE BOOK 		BACK PACK 		GRAD UNISEX 		GRAD GIRL 		BOOKS 		STUDY BOOKS 		CAR 	
Occasion depicted	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
P2	1	1							1	1	1	1	1	1
P3					1	1								
P4			1	1					1					
P6	1	1				1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1
P7	1	1	1	1					1	1		1		
P8	1	1	1		1		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
P9							1	1	1	1	1	1		
P10	1	1							1	1	1	1		

	CALCULATOR 		LAPTOP 		TENNIS BALL 		CAKE 		SURF BOARD 		FOOTBALL 		EAR PHONES 	
Occasion depicted	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd

P2	1		1	1			1						1	1
P3			1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
P4					1	1	1	1	1	1			1	1
P6			1	1			1	1					1	1
P7		1		1			1	1					1	
P8		1		1										
P9									1	1			1	1
P10				1		1							1	1

	HOCKEY		CRICKET		GOLF		BIKE		SPEAKERS		PIZZA		HAMBURGER	
														
Occasion Depicted	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
P2									1	1	1	1	1	1
P3	1	1	1	1		1								
P4	1	1							1					

P6									1	1				
P7							1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
P8														
P9									1	1	1	1	1	1
P10									1	1				

	MONEY		ART BRUSHES		MOBILE PHONE		CREDIT CARDS		CAT 		BUSINESS MAN 		PEN 	
Occasion Depicted	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
P2	1	1			1	1	1	1					1	
P3														
P4			1											
P6	1	1					1	1	1				1	1
P7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1
P8														

P9													1	1
P10													1	1

	GRAD CERT 		FILM CAMERA 		HEART WINGS 		TREE 		WORLD 		TV 		LIFEGUARD 		SOCCER BALL 	
Occasion Depicted	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
P2	1		1	1			1	1			1	1				
P3																
P4									1	1			1		1	1
P6	1	1			1	1					1	1				
P7		1														
P8																
P9								1	1	1			1	1		
P10			1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	1				

	CHIPS 		DRINK 		COFFEE 		LUGGAGE 		ROUND BALL 		PLANE 		WHISTLE 		KEY BOARD 	
Occasion depicted	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd
P2																
P3																
P4																
P6																
P7																
P8																
P9																
P10																

	INVOICE 		BOAT 		MICRO SCOPE 		HOUSE 		SHOPPING TROLLEY 		YOU TUBE 		GUITAR 		PRAM 		BED ROOM 	
Occasion Depicted	1st	2	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	1	2	1s	2nd	1st	2	1st	2nd
P2																		
P3																		
P4																		
P6																		
P7																		
P8																		
P9																		
P10																		

4.5 The Main Study

4.5.1 The Students and Their Schools

The students who were participants in the main study were in their final term of Year 10. The schools were stand-alone Year 7 to 10 Tasmanian secondary schools located in urban areas of Hobart. All students were to transition to senior secondary school to attend Year 11 in the following year. The identitygrams made by the students in the main study are provided as Appendix L. Table 4.5 reports on the number of participating students by gender in the main study.

Table 4.5

Number of Male and Female Students in the Main Study and School

Students	School 2	School 3	Totals
Male	4	3	7
Female	6	1	7
Total	10	4	14

The students in the main study attended low socio-economic status schools as measured by My School Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) scale (ACARA, 2013). Their teachers purposefully selected the students. The students held an ambivalent attitude towards continuation of study beyond Year 10 and were considered socially and educationally disadvantaged. These two schools had much lower than average national ICSEA scores.

4.5.2 Main Study Students

As noted already the term ‘at risk’ in the context of this research study refers to students who had disengaged, or were seen by their teachers as highly likely to disengage from education and not compete Years 11 and 12. The teachers were asked not to invite students to participate who were currently receiving additional support, but instead the students they felt were struggling to maintain their education participation motivation and who were finding post Year 10 decision making difficult. All student participants in the main study attended the two selected lower Index of Socio-educational Advantage (ICSEA index) schools. The ICSEA was created by ACARA (2013). An ICSEA value uses family background information provided to schools directly by families, including parental occupation and the parents’ school education levels.

Twenty-four students initially returned consent forms and agreed to take part in the main study. Due to informal withdrawal the number of participants reduced to fourteen. One student withdrew formally from the study after the first occasion of data collection but continued to participate in the brief orientation to Year 11 and 12 course. Nine students lost interested in continuing in the research and did not take part on the second occasion when the data collection activities were conducted. Of the 14 participants who completed the second round of the data collection, nine chose to take part in the orientation to Year 11 and 12 short course offered by the researcher and five chose not to take part.

4.5.3 School Contact Procedure

Approval to conduct the pilot and the main research was required and granted by: (1) the University of Tasmania (UTAS) Human Research Ethics Committees (HREC) and, (2) the Tasmanian Department of Education (DoE), Educational Performance Services. These approvals gave the researcher permission to proceed with inviting participants to take part.

The procedure approved by DoE required the researcher to approach student participants via their school and teacher participants via their school and/or section. An email invitation was sent to the Principals of seven schools asking if they would permit the study to be conducted (see Appendix F). Four school principals indicated interest. The researcher made phone contact with each school to set up appointment times with each principal and then visited the five schools to meet with the principals. These face-to-face meetings discussed the purpose and intent of the research and the principals then agreed or disagreed to allow their Year 10 students to receive information inviting them to take part in the research. The researcher provided each of the schools with sample student information sheets about the study as well as copies of the consent forms (see Information Sheets and Consent Forms for the students and parents in the main study, Appendix B).

It is important to note here the difficulty the researcher had, not only in engaging the interest of principals and teachers in schools to take part, but also in engaging the interest of parents to agree to allow the students to take part. Of the five schools whose principals did agree to take part (one non-government and four government secondary schools), two of the five schools did not take part because none of the parent/student consent forms that were distributed in the information sessions were returned to the school from homes.

4.5.4 Schools and data collection

In the main study, Department of Education ethics approval was required, however, individual principals decided whether their students would take part. Four school principals were asked via email if they wished to take part. All agreed and provided to the researcher the name and contact details of their Year 10 Co-ordinators. Each of the Year 10 Level Co-ordinators from the schools was contacted by phone, with the researcher visiting the school to discuss the details of research. All the schools asked to take part in the research were in

greater Hobart and in outer residential, low socio-economic communities. At three of the schools the Year 10 coordinators requested the researcher conduct student information sessions to inform students about the research. These were scheduled and held at three schools. The fourth school asked for the permission and information kits to be delivered to the school in the envelopes to be purposely given to the individual students by their Year 10 coordinator. The fourth school's students therefore did not meet with the researcher and did not have the opportunity to hear directly about the research and/or the course on offer. At that school none of the students returned permission forms. The decision was made by the principal to not continue in the research past that stage.

The students in the main study were provided with information about the course at both the information session and in the documents they took home so they could decide if they wished to: (1) participate in the research only, (2) participate in the course only, (3) participate in both the research and the course, or, (4) participate in neither. At all three remaining schools the researcher met with small groups of interested students (who had been approached by their Year 10 coordinator prior and given a brief understanding of the research) to fully explain the purpose of the research, the course on offer, and to be asked if they were interested in participating. Each student was given a permission and information kit to take home to read with their parents or guardians. These forms are included in Appendix B. Eighteen small group student meetings were held over a three-month period at the three schools. A total of 85 students took part in the information sessions. Each of the information sessions took approximately 20-30 minutes.

One of the three government schools in the main study did not go on to participate in the research. The school had invited 22 students to two information sessions and all of the students had indicated their interest in taking part. All the students were provided with information and permission documents to take home. However, no forms were returned from

this school, despite many follow up emails and personal phone call discussions with the Year 10 Level Co-ordinator. A teacher from this school did participate in an interview.

It is important to note here the three schools were all low on the My School Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) scale. The non-return of the student permission forms from two schools, despite the considerable effort of both the schools' teachers and principals, demonstrates the significant challenges inherent in conducting school related research with students who are disengaging from schooling. The two remaining schools invited sixty-three students to eight information sessions. Three information sessions were held at School 2 and five information sessions at School 3. Twenty-four students completed and returned permission forms, 10 from School 2 and 14 from School 3. Ten students from School 2 and 3 did not complete data collection on the second occasion. The data these students provided on the first occasion were not included in the analysis. Fourteen students completed their participation in the research in the main study.

The reliability of the visual identitygram instrument was established by the pilot trial; therefore, its use proceeded to the main study. Each participant completed the main study's research activities of identitygram making and the interpretive interviews that followed individually. The collage making and brief interview took approximately 30 minutes per individual in total on each occasion. As discussed in the literature review, Prosser (2006, 2012) stated that visual research imagery such as the use of icons is unique because it allows the participants to create meaning by symbolising or resembling, rather than capturing, such as a photographic image. Once created, each identitygram was unique to the young person who had created it. Inherently, some collections of identitygrams shared similarities when the group interests, experiences, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and purpose were similarly

shared. The depicted identities reflected the social, economic, recreational, seasonal, ethnic, cultural and educational influences present at the time the identitygrams were made.

Each participant was given an A3 sized pro forma printed with a large circle. The participants were asked to write their name in the centre of the A3 paper. Participants then selected icons depicting things they like and value and people icons to represent particular people important to them. Again, in the same way used in the pilot study, participants were asked to create two identitygrams to depict their identity, one for now (NOW) and one forecasting three years into the future (FUTURE).

The researcher provided each student participant with the same number of small individual symbols and picture icons and invited the participant to make a collage of their identity with the icons. To provide the research with data depicting any identity change, the collages were made on two occasions ten days apart. Participants identified with a few, some or many of the symbols and pictures provided to them. The icons symbolised known aspects or dimensions of their lives as young urban Australians. If an aspect of identity was not provided in the icon set, participants were invited to create their own icon/s to add to their identitygram. All of the icons used in the identitygram kit were obtained from free of copyright charge sites on the Internet.

In the main study, two participants added two more self-drawn additional icons (chef and cheerleading). These self-drawn icons were added to the appropriate variable category for analysis but were not added to the icon kit. To avoid any influence that may have occurred because the researcher was also the teacher of the vocational education short course some of the participants had taken part in, a research assistant conducted the data collection activities with the students from the two public schools. Thus, on each occasion after completing the identitygrams, each participant spoke briefly with the researcher and was asked several brief questions about their identitygrams. The identitygram interview schedule

is provided as Appendix J. The participants' feedback forms were completed at the end of the final day of the course.

Each participant made a present and future identitygram on each occasion. The identitygram data were included in the analysis when participants completed identitygrams on both first and second occasions. The completed identitygrams from both occasions were stored electronically on the University's secure file as sources. Each identitygram was NVivo coded and analysed using the same procedure outlined for the pilot study.

After participants created their identitygrams, they were interviewed by the research assistant. The interviews were brief, informal and semi-structured. Participants were asked the questions whilst looking at the identitygrams they had made. The purpose of the interviews was to provide each participant with the opportunity to interpret the validity of their own collages by telling the researcher if the collages were valid depictions or representations of their identity.

4.6 Teachers' Data

4.6.1 An Introduction to the Teachers

The second part of the main study conducted in-depth interviews with key teacher participants. All participants were Tasmanian government teachers and/or teacher qualified educational support officers. The teacher participants were either personally invited by the researcher or contacted the researcher with a request to participate. Four of the teacher participants were teaching full-time in one of the two government schools that took part in the study. Three of the teachers who took part taught students who participated in the study. One of the teachers who asked to participate in an interview was from one of the schools that withdrew from Part 1 (student participants).

Six of the teacher participants were educational support teachers, either Education Supports (PPs) or Youth Transition Officers (YLOs). All these participants held teaching qualifications and worked in the schools, providing individual support to Year 10 students and organising group and individual workplace educational experiences. Two of the teacher participants chose to be interviewed individually and the remaining 8 chose to participate in group conversations. The following table shows the teachers, PPs and YLOs who took part in the study and their type of interview.

Table 4.6

Interview Type and the Educational Role of the Teacher Participants

	Classroom Teachers	Others Teachers	Total
Individual interviews	2		2
Group interviews	2	6	8
Total	4	6	10

All six Pathway Planners and Youth Liaison Officers participants taught Years 9 and 10 students and informally or formally supported them as individuals and in groups. Their position responsibility included supporting senior secondary students in purposeful and meaningful learning participation decisions to support transition to Year 11 studies and/or training or employment. The teacher participants all held firsthand knowledge of the issues and challenges in relation to the student transition into Years 11 and 12, and retention and education attainment of students in secondary education in Tasmania from disadvantaged communities.

4.6.2 The Questions Teachers were Asked

Qualitative in-depth, semi-structured conversational interviews were conducted with teachers and the educational support officers. The guiding questions related to education participation, transition and retention through Year 10 to Years 11 and 12 in Tasmania and these provided prompts for the interview conversations. All the guiding questions related to education participation and inclusion and supporting disadvantaged students' transition from Year 10 to Year 11 and 12 in Tasmania. The guiding questions were:

- What educational factors do you believe influence young people's decisions whether or not to continue on to Year 11?
- What kinds of school programs and interventions do you believe can be effective in supporting young people in education and training post Year 10? Can you provide an example of a program you know that is effective?
- Are you aware of any difficulties or barriers young people experience in being able to follow their education plan?
- This research is particularly focused on the students who may not complete Year 12. In your professional experience, what behaviours and characteristics would identify young people who belong to this group?
- What systemic change is needed to increase student engagement in education and training post Year 10 in Tasmania?

The researcher iteratively developed the guiding interview questions and at times used prompts to invited participants to expand on the insights they offered. For example, particular interest in a comment would use the prompt "that is an interesting comment" or "I am very curious about that" and add a reflective tag to a few words within the comment the participant had made. For example, "can you tell me more about….?" or "why do you think

this happens?" In this way, the participant's responses expanded on how they felt the systems could work better to increase participation opportunities for the target group.

4.6.3 Data Analysis Procedure Teacher Participants

All interviews took place at the particular high school or school-based workplace of the teacher participating in the main study. The two participating schools were located in lower socio-economic suburban areas of greater Hobart, Tasmania.

The interviews were transcribed into Word and the transcripts imported into NVivo (2016) as sources for coding and data analysis. The analysis of the interview data was conducted in a two-round sequence. The first round was inductive to establish themes and concepts and the second part re-analysed these concepts and themes using the Bronfenbrenner 's (1979, 1992) ecological theoretical framework involving the exosystem, the mesosystem, and the microsystem (see Figure 2.1). In the first-round analysis, the three conversation transcripts were imported into software program NVivo as non-participant identifiable sources. The first round took an inductive approach to investigate the content of the interviews by analysing the raw data. Coding the entire contents of interviews in the first stage of the analysis increases methodological validity and limits the potential for coding bias (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). The NVivo coding nodes were created by identifying thematic relations and links in a process of constant comparison and contrasting with previous themes and coding to an existing node or creating a new node if no thematic relationship existed. This approach is consistent with a grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2014; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Inductive coding begins with organising the raw data through a process known as open coding. Through open coding, researchers review the source making nodes as they read or view the source. Through this process, researchers generate knowledge and increase understanding of the material. The thematic nodes of the

analysis gradually built as new ideas and points were expressed. The intention of the first round was to establish a foundational understanding of themes. No limit was applied to the number of themes created using the saturation coding approach. This approach analysed and coded the entire contents of interview conversations. Twenty-seven nodes were created. Figure 4.5 below illustrates the round 1 interview thematic nodes in a network created by the association of their core ideas (Hogan, Carrasco, & Wellman, 2007).

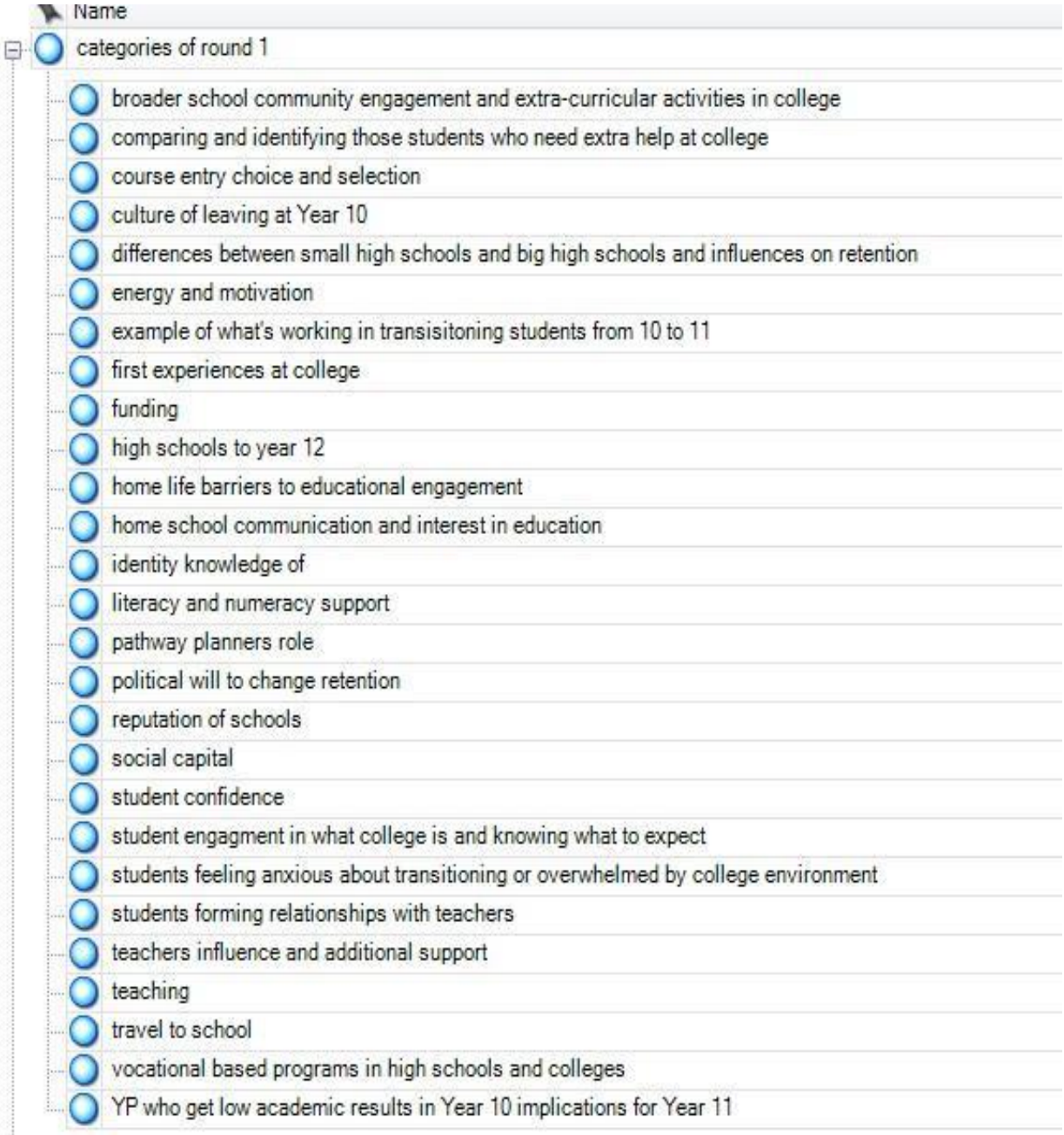


Figure 4.5. Round 1 data analysis categories.

In Round 2 of analysis, the 27 inductive themes were categorised into one of three microsystem, mesosystem or exosystem spheres. These three spheres were the coding nodes for the second round of NVivo (2016) coding. Axial coding is the methodological name given to the process of progressing coding from a first stage inductive analysis to a second stage deductive analysis. Axial coding is a process of reassembling data in a way that draws attention to the relationships between themes and within categories (Wicks, 2010). This process requires identifying the conditions that give rise to the inductive node. For example, the condition may be the context into which the condition is embedded, or the action or interaction in which the condition was handled. Using the axial coding approach, the second-round analysis identified which one of the three systemic conditions were operating as influences on the student experience of education transition. The second-round process created NVivo parent nodes for each of the three systemic conditions. The first-round themes were then allocated to one of the model's three systemic spheres, categorised as contexts or conditions operating within one of these three spheres. Using this approach, the 27 first round themes became 8 microsystem, 13 mesosystem and 6 exosystem node categories for the second round of analysis using NVivo.

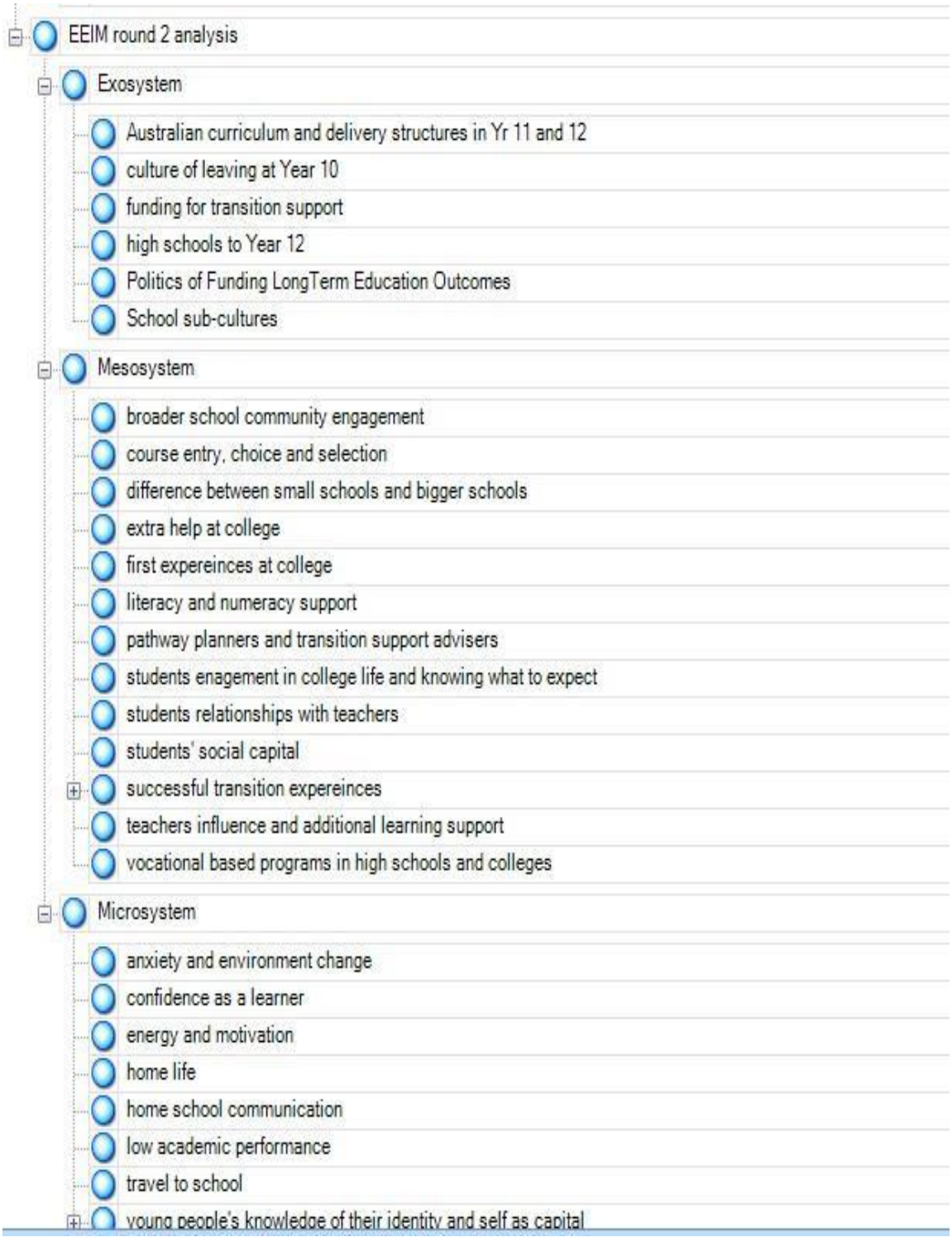


Figure 4.6. Round 2 data analysis categories.

The second round of coding went back to the original transcript's sources to code the teacher participant conversational interview comments to the identified systemic thematic

nodes. The 27 node categories, from the first round deductive thematic coding to the second round deductive analysis, were as follows:

Microsystem

• Energy and motivation

• Home life barriers and facilitators to education engagement

• Home school communication and family interest in education

• Young people's knowledge of their own identity

• Confidence as a learner

• Students feeling anxious about transitioning or overwhelmed by new learning environment

• Travel to school

• The implication of low academic results in Year 10 for Year 11 education participation

Mesosystem

• Broader school community engagement and extra-curricular activities in college

• Comparing and identifying those students who need extra help at college

• Course entry choice and selection

• Differences between small high schools and bigger high schools

• What's working in transitioning students from Year 10 to Year 11

• First experiences at college

• Literacy and numeracy support

• Education Supports and transition support advisers

• Students' social capital

• Student engagement in what college life is like and knowing what to expect

• Students' relationships with teachers

• Teachers' influence and additional personal learning support

• Vocational-based programs in high schools and colleges

Exosystem

• Culture of leaving at Year 10

• Funding for transition support

• High schools to Year 12

• Political will to change retention

• Reputation of schools

• The Australian curriculum

These themes provided a framework for the data analysis of the interviews and small focus groups. The data analysis of the main study (student and teacher) is presented in the Chapters 5 and 6.

4.7 The Brief Orientation to Year 11 and 12 Course

4.7.1 The Course Content

Nine of the fourteen students who took part in the main study took part in the brief orientation to Years 11 and 12 course. The course was an entry-level vocational qualification. Table 4.7 following shows the gender of participants and whether they participated in the intervention.

Table 4.7

Gender of Brief Orientation Course Participants and Non-Course Participants

Gender	Participated orientation course	Non-Participated orientation course	Total
Male	4	3	7
Female	5	2	7
Total students	9	5	14

The brief orientation to the Years 11 and 12 course was an entry-level vocational qualification. The qualification is recognised nationally as the first step in vocational pathways that include the health and community services sectors. The qualification code was CHC10108 and title, Certificate I in Work Preparation. The CHC10108 course was chosen as a curriculum package for the brief orientation to the Years 11 and 12 course because it had a clear emphasis on creating a foundation for future educational opportunity. The content of the Certificate Level I course focused on giving students knowledge of vocational options provided by the Australian vocational education pathway framework and foundational community sector skills. This curriculum content and the requirements of the qualification were delivered by the researcher using a humanistic, applied and experiential teaching and learning approach which provided active and student-centred hands-on learning. The aim of the experiential approach was to develop students' competencies and potentially to create a follow-on effect to extend and enrich participants' identity by developing interpersonal

skills, plus learning and thinking, risk-taking and decision-making skills through exposure to new ideas.

Competencies such as communication, working cooperatively, decision making, career development, and occupational health and safety were included in the competency range alongside the underpinning knowledge of critical thinking and consideration of broader social issues such as inclusion. The three units in the VET in school CHC10108 Certificate I course have the potential to help build the students' personal understanding of their community, the world of work, and knowledge of alternative pathways in education. Alternative educational pathways often suit students who are more practical- oriented rather than academic-oriented (Lamb et al., 2015).

4.7.2 Course outcomes

The young people who participated in the CHC10108 course attended their school as normal. The course was delivered at the school within the normal school timetable, with the scheduling of specific CS Certificate I classes made in consultation with the principal and senior members of the school's teaching co-ordination team. The orientation to Years 11 and 12 course took place in the final weeks of term three in 2012. The Australian Qualification Framework (QQF) Certificate One course took approximately 30 core delivery hours to complete. The course was delivered over 5 days in school number 1 and the students completed the certificate level 1 qualification in full. The full course was unable to be completed fully in school number 2 due to other formal end of year activities at that time. Student in school number 2 completed four days of the brief intervention course and qualified for a statement of attainment.

A student-focused adult learning and teaching pedagogy was used in delivering the intervention. Four key principles describe the approach:

- The group of students is considered by the teacher as a collaborative group of learners
- The learners are provided with the opportunity to acquire critical thinking
- The teacher acts as task enabler and orchestrates rather than controls the learning environment
- The learning situation creates purposeful motivation that creates an incentive for students to actively participate.

Due to the specialised course content and Department of Education teacher registration requirements, only a registered VET Community Services specialised teacher was permitted to deliver the course in the two secondary high schools. For this and other practical reasons, the teacher of the VET (CHC10108) course was the researcher herself. Although the dual role of teacher as assessor is commonplace across the whole range of education settings, including VET training delivery, in Tasmania, there was concern raised in relation to the possible influence of the researcher in performing the triple role of teacher/assessor and of data collector. To resolve this concern, a research assistant was employed by the University of Tasmania to collect the data from the young people who participated in the main study.

A simulated work environment was provided to enable students to practice and demonstrate communication skills, use technology appropriate to training needs, provide access to office equipment and resources, process workplace documentation and address workplace and personal routines designed to improve health and safety. Training resources included handouts, links to relevant Internet sites, video clips, and industry-specific resources. Detailed information about the structure and sequencing of this program is outlined in the training delivery plan attached. Assessment validation for the CHC10108 course was conducted by Polytechnic Community Services senior teachers. Training

activities included project-based learning, role-plays, class discussions, research activities, studies/scenarios, demonstrations, guest speakers and hands-on activities.

A range of assessment methods was used for each unit or cluster of units when assessing competence. Many of the assessments were clustered, as described in the assessment plan. Assessment methods used for this program included:

- Observations
- Written questions
- Scenarios/ studies

Assessment activities were developed by the researcher and later moderated by the Registered Training Organisation (RTO). Each assessment activity was designed with consideration of the specific evidence requirements of each unit of competency as required by the CHC10108 Training Package. Many of the assessment tasks used cooperative and collaborative student partnership approaches that combined both learning and assessment processes. The intervention's core course topics are listed in the following table next to their unit title.

Table 4.8

Core Orientation to Year 11 and 12 Course Topics

Unit Title	Topics
Work with others	Apply basic communication skills Workplace communication procedures Communication in the workplace Occupational Safety
Community understanding	Demonstrate commitment to values and philosophies underpinning work in the community sector Identify future career opportunities Work in a team

The CHC10108 course provided appropriate content to focus students' knowledge and learning on interpersonal skills and to provide students with opportunities to reflect on their decision-making skills. The course allowed discussion around broader social issues linked to diversity as well as focus on academic planning skills. The orientation to Years 11 and 12 course helped to expose the Year 10 students to a broader range of learning experiences that had potential to strengthen their interest in the world of work and increase their understanding of the prerequisite skills required for working as a member of a team and communicating with others in a written and oral form.

4.7.3 Participants' Feedback

After completing the brief orientation to the Year 11 and 12 course, students were given a feedback survey sheet to evaluate the course. The feedback survey was administered on the final day of the course. Feedback questions were selected by the researcher from a

bank provided and approved by the course Recognised Training Authority (RTO), Polytechnic Tasmania. The questions chosen by the researcher fitted with the purpose of the course in relation to the research because they asked participating students about their learning outcomes, their educational experience, if the training was useful and whether the course information assisted them in making decisions about their future work, training and education plans. A copy of the student feedback form is provided as Appendix I.

Chapter 5

5.1 Findings - Analysis of the Identitygrams

This chapter discusses findings from the analysis of the students' identitygrams and relates to the first two research questions:

- Is the identitygram procedure a suitable method to investigate students' self-identity?
- Does school disadvantage influence students' depictions of their self-identity, as shown in their identitygrams?

5.2 Pilot

Pilot Study: Thirty-four students commenced participation in the research and completed first occasion collages. Twelve students informally withdrew from the research. Ten students from the schools located in communities of disadvantage disengaged from the research process, compared to the two from the less disadvantaged non-government school. Maintaining participants in research is a challenge not unique to this study (Spigarelli, 2008). On each data collection occasion each participant was provided with a full 'kit' of 80 icons to select from, cut out and apply to paper to create each visual identity collage. Once finished, each collage became an identitygram. Each of the identitygram collages was coded separately for data analysis using the NVivo -12 (2016) software programming.

5.3 Education Depicted in Identitygrams

The first analysis undertaken was of how all the students used educational icons in their identitygrams. For the purpose of analysis, a group of icons was categorised as having two types of potential education orientation. The first group of icons depicted education as an outcome or an achievement (four icons) and the second category related to the process and

activities of learning (eight icons). As described in the methodology chapter, the rule of polysemicity applied. This rule accepts that the icons have personal meaning in their use, but it is not necessary for the researcher to know this meaning. For the process of analysis, education as a concept was considered depicted when the participants used any of the icons that most represent the informal and formal activities of school learning (e.g. a calculator or pile of books) and icons usually associated with education achievement outcomes (e.g. a certificate or graduation hat). The grouping of these particular icons, as related to education only applies within the specific social and cultural context of student selecting these icons. There are no right or wrong icons or right or wrong interpretation.

Icons Categorised as Related to Education Outcome or Achievement	Icons Categorised as Related to Education as a Process

Figure 5.1. The identitygram kit's twelve education-category icons.

The NVivo screen shot below (Figure 5.2) shows the use of education icons in all 88 identitygrams the students made. The screen-shot has two columns - sources and references. NVivo coding accuracy is indicated in this screen shot by the same total appearing for each icon coded in both the source column and the reference column. The same number in both the sources and reference columns indicates the coding entered individually in NVivo was accurate.

Name	Sources	References
Educational Icons	0	0
outcome icons	0	0
female graduation	20	20
graduation certificate	25	25
male graduation	23	23
pile of books with mortar boar	31	31
process icons	0	0
calculator	8	8
earth from space	21	21
laptop	40	40
microscope	6	6
pen	18	18
pile of books	28	28
protractor	3	3
TV screen	17	17

Figure 5.2. Education icons used by participants as sources and references.

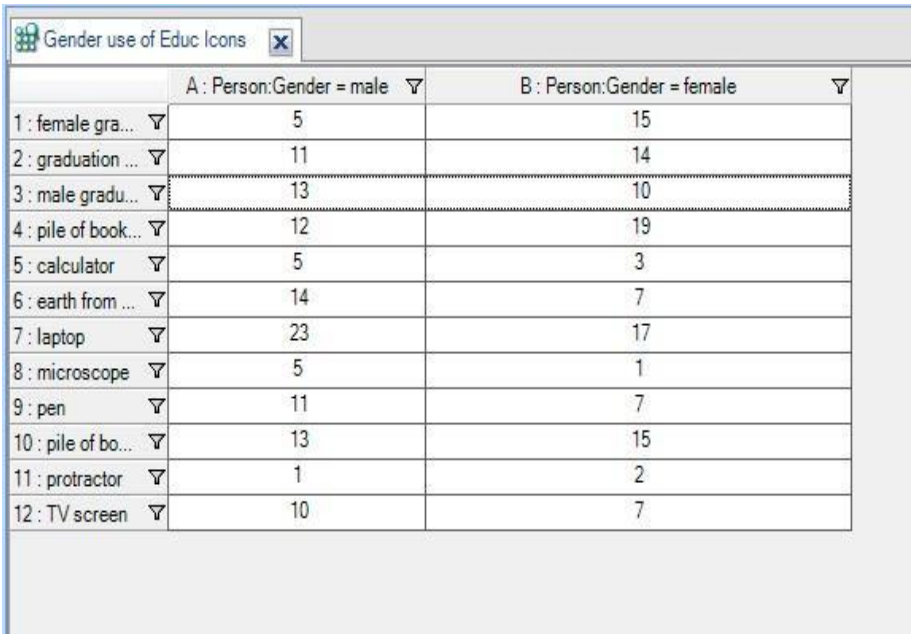
The most frequently used icon by all participants to depict an item categorised in this analysis, relating to education, was the laptop icon. The 22 student participants depicted the laptop in 40 identitygrams out of the total possible 88. This not unexpected because the 'laptop' is used in the Year 10 classroom for writing assignments and researching topics on the internet. It may have other purposes and this difference is explored more when the interviews occurred with the students. As discussed in the methodology chapter, an identitygram is a visual text, therefore, the principle of polysemicity applies. This is because it is the individual who is doing the interpretation of each icon. Polysemicity accepts that there may be a range of possible meanings depending on the person's interpretation.

For all the student participants from all three schools, four icons were popular. For the purposes of defining a 'popular' icon, an icon used more than twenty times by all participants was considered popular. Three education icons were particularly popular. The female graduation hat icon  was used 20 times by participants, the graduation certificate  was used 25 times and the books with a mortarboard  was used 31 times.

Six of the 12 available education-related icons were used between 20 and 30 times in the 88 identitygrams created by the 22 participants. As indicated above, three of the icons were female graduation hat, (used 20 times), graduation certificate (used 25 times) and a pile of books with mortarboard (used 31 times). Also, the laptop was selected 40 times, the pile of books 28 times, earth from space 21 times and male graduation icon 23 times. Looking at the student participant group, education icons were the most frequently used icons to depict identities in the identitygrams. This suggests that the student participants as a group held educational aspirations. Although outside the scope of this research, whether these aspirations have been achieved could be determined by the interpretive interviews if future research applied the identitygram approach longitudinally to follow-up educational outcomes.

5.4 Possible Gender and Use of Icons

Although it was not the intention of this study to investigate gender, in part because the small sample size would make any comment difficult to generalise, out of interest it was reviewed. Twelve male and ten female students participated in the research. An analysis of male and female participants' use of the education category icons provided the research a way of looking at difference in male and female participant's depictions. The following NVivo screenshot (Figure 5.3) shows the number of education icons depicted by male and by female participants in all the identitygrams the students made. Column A shows the male students' use of each of the icons and column B shows the female students' use of each of these icons.



Gender use of Educ Icons

	A : Person:Gender = male	B : Person:Gender = female
1 : female gra...	5	15
2 : graduation ...	11	14
3 : male gradu...	13	10
4 : pile of book...	12	19
5 : calculator	5	3
6 : earth from ...	14	7
7 : laptop	23	17
8 : microscope	5	1
9 : pen	11	7
10 : pile of bo...	13	15
11 : protractor	1	2
12 : TV screen	10	7

Figure 5.3. NVivo screenshot of 12 education-related icons by participant's gender.

To compare the use of education category icons between the male and female student participants, two NVivo queries were conducted for each gender group members' use of the icons. The screen shots depicted in Figure 5.4 and 5.5 below illustrate the two queries. The 12 education category icons are listed 1-12 down the first left-hand column. For the NVivo coding each student was code-named.

The code names are alphabetical from left to right along the title bar in Figure 5.4 and 5.5 below. The number of times the participant used each of the icons is in the column under their code name. Zero in their column indicates the participant did not use this icon in any of the four identitygrams they made. The numeral one indicates the student used this icon on one occasion out of the possible four, a two shows the student used the icon twice, a three indicates three uses in their identitygrams. If the number is four it indicates the student used this icon in each of the four identitygrams they made.

Gender use of Educ Icons (2)

	A:ARON	B:ASEY	C:BEDS	D:COUX	E:EDON	F:JENZ	G:JETH	H:KILE	I:RYCK	J:SACE	K:STAC	L:ZEAN
1 : female graduation	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	2
2 : graduation certificate	0	1	1	0	3	3	2	1	0	0	0	0
3 : male graduation	0	1	0	2	1	2	2	2	0	3	0	0
4 : pile of books with mortar board	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	2	0	0	0	2
5 : calculator	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	0	0	0
6 : earth from space	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	4	0	1	0	4
7 : laptop	0	4	1	0	4	3	4	2	2	3	0	2
8 : microscope	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	0
9 : pen	0	0	0	0	1	3	3	4	0	0	0	0
10 : pile of books	0	0	0	0	0	3	4	4	0	0	0	2
11 : protractor	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
12 : TV screen	0	0	2	0	2	0	4	2	0	0	0	0

Figure 5.4. Male participant use of educational icons.

Gender use of Educ Icons fem

	A:ALRA	B:ALRD	C:COER	D:EMLD	E:JAON	F:KAER	G:KESH	H:MONS	I:TACE	J:TAER
1 : female graduation	2	3	0	1	2	1	1	4	1	0
2 : graduation certificate	0	1	0	3	2	1	2	0	3	2
3 : male graduation	0	1	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	2
4 : pile of books with mortar board	1	4	0	4	1	2	0	4	2	1
5 : calculator	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1
6 : earth from space	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0
7 : laptop	2	2	0	4	0	1	4	0	0	2
8 : microscope	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 : pen	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	3	0	2
10 : pile of books	0	3	0	3	1	0	0	4	2	2
11 : protractor	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
12 : TV screen	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3

Figure 5.5. Female participants use of educational icons.

The data from Figures 5.4 and 5.5 was exported into an Excel spreadsheet for further comparative analysis. To compare how male and female participants may have used the icons differently as two groups, a simple equation was used; the number of education-related icons used by each gender group was divided by the number of participants in that group. This provided the average number of times the education-related icons were used by each gender group and by each individual participant in each gender group.

Table 5.1

Education Icons and Gender

Participant Group	Total number of education icons used by the participants	Average number of education icons used by each participant in the group
Male participants	125	10.4
Female participants	115	11.5

The analysis shows that the average number of education icons used in the four identitygrams made by each male participant was 10.4. This can be compared with the average number of icons used in four identitygrams by each female participant, 11.5. The comparative analysis of this group of female and male students' use of the education icons shows no significant difference between the two groups.

5.5 Schools and the Students' Icon Use

Of the three schools participating in the research, one was a non-government school located in an average socio-economic urban area (with the student population mainly living outside their school geographical area) and two schools were government funded public schools located in urban communities of significant disadvantage, with the student population living in-area. The student participants from the two government schools were invited by their teachers to participate in the research. The non-government school students self-selected and may thus be presumed to be keener to participate.

To establish the advantage status of each of the schools the Australian government's Index of Community Socio-educational Advantage (ICSEA) was utilised. The government secondary schools were selected and asked to take part in the research because they scored low on the Australian government's socioeconomic indicator scale of ICSEA. Using the 2012 Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) shows the two government schools that took part in this research had values of 879 and 883. These values indicate significantly lower socio educational advantage compared to other schools in Australia. The average ICSEA value of a school in Australia is 1000.

Approximately 600 on the scale represents school communities with extreme educational disadvantage, such as is seen in some indigenous communities in the Northern Territory of Australia where English is a second language and health and well-being indicators show extreme poverty (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2013). The highest ICSEA score for a school in Australia is around 1300. This score would represent school communities with extreme social and economic advantage.

The 'schools and the student's icon use' analysis compared the students who took part in the research from the two government schools (ICSEA values of 879 and 883) with those from the non-government school (Australian average index score of 996) to consider how their grouped depicted identities may differ. As discussed in the literature review, school has an important influence on identity development. School provides a context for identity to develop beyond the influence of family and the geographical community and can be particularly influential to the development of identity during adolescence. Rice (1981) revealed adolescence to be a very active stage of identity development, perhaps the most active stage in the lifespan. School can at best optimise identity forming or at worst fail completely to provide identity development opportunities. Life-long self-worth, self-

understanding, positive connection with others, well-being and community mindfulness can be influenced and established at school. Adolescence as a developmental period therefore provides an important and valuable window of identity intervention opportunity. School-based strategies aimed at developing and strengthening identity during adolescence have the potential to influence life-long perceptions of self in powerful ways (Cote, 1996).

5.6 Examples of identitigrams

The following identitygrams illustrate typical identity depictions made by the students. The strengths and interests as depicted by icons in the identitygrams help show what the students know about themselves. Young people draw upon self-knowledge to make decisions and explore their interests and ideas relating to their pathways in education courses and subjects in the more specialised studies beyond Year 10. The student participants in this research attended different schools located in different communities. When comparing and contrasting the identitygrams, it is important to reiterate the coding rule of NVivo polysemicity used by the identitygram approach. There may be a range of possible icon related meanings depicted in the collages, but these meanings were not discussed with participants. The researcher accepted that the use of specific icons by each student indicated and represented personally important and valued aspects to that student.

5.6.1 Student EMLD

The identitygram below (Figure 5.6) was created by a female student in Year 10 at the nongovernment secondary school. The young woman made this identitygram on the first occasion and it depicted how she saw herself in three years' time. There are icons in the identitygram that show her three years' future projected thoughts of having a long term committed relationship and a baby in her life. There are the items of domestic life: money, credit cards, houses and a shopping trolley. There are also books, a calculator and a

graduation hat. The use of these icons indicates that this young woman wishes in the future to balance the domestic demands of life with continued learning and visualises herself actively seeking to attain an educational outcome in three years' time.

Figure 5.6. EMLD 1st occasion in the future.

The identitygram provides a rich visual window into the context and concepts of what this young woman is thinking. It shows perceptions of who EMLD wishes to become, and what she believes she will find important in her life, three years in the future.

5.6.2 Student COER

Another young woman, with code name COER, also in Year 10, made the next example (Figure 5.7) identitygram. This young woman attended a government secondary school located in a community of disadvantage. Like other student participants in the research, COER's teacher thought her ambivalent about her future education participation beyond her current Year 10. The identitygram depicts how COER saw her future in three years' time.

There are family members, a relationship, travel and a home. There are also items of domestic life and a car. There are no icons in this identitygram that suggest COER intends to continue her education or sees herself attaining an educational outcome in the future. The absence of these icons in COER's depictions in the identitygrams is significant to the research because of what is not present in the participant's data. This provides a stark contrast to the identitygram of EMLD discussed above. This data provides an example that demonstrates the identitygram approach can identify significance through the absence of data and in this way, provide insights into the identity of adolescents that interviews and other identity gathering tools cannot.

Figure 5.7. COER (student) 1st occasion in the future.

The following three identitygrams are examples made by male participants. One of the identitygrams was made by a student who attended the non-government school, and the other two identitygrams were made by students who attended the schools located in communities experiencing disadvantage. The identitygrams are all their 'future' first occasion depictions.

The students were asked to consider their future three years ahead and make an identitygram of who they see themselves becoming, what will interest them, and what they think will be important to them in three years' time.

5.6.3 Student KILE

Figure 5.8, following, shows KILE's (student) identitygram. KILE made this identitygram on the first data collection occasion when asked to project his identity three years into his future. KILE attended the non-government school, a school community that on the ICSEA scale was within socio-economically average range for Tasmania. The depictions show KILE's varied interests including the planet, books (perhaps reading), film making, writing, love, perhaps a baby and a home in the future. KILE sees himself as a graduate, depicted by the male with a graduation hat. This identitygram holds considerable education viability because KILE has a range of interests he could pursue, and education is depicted as an aspect of how he sees himself. The interests depicted are compatible with him continuing specialist subjects or vocational courses in education beyond Year 10.

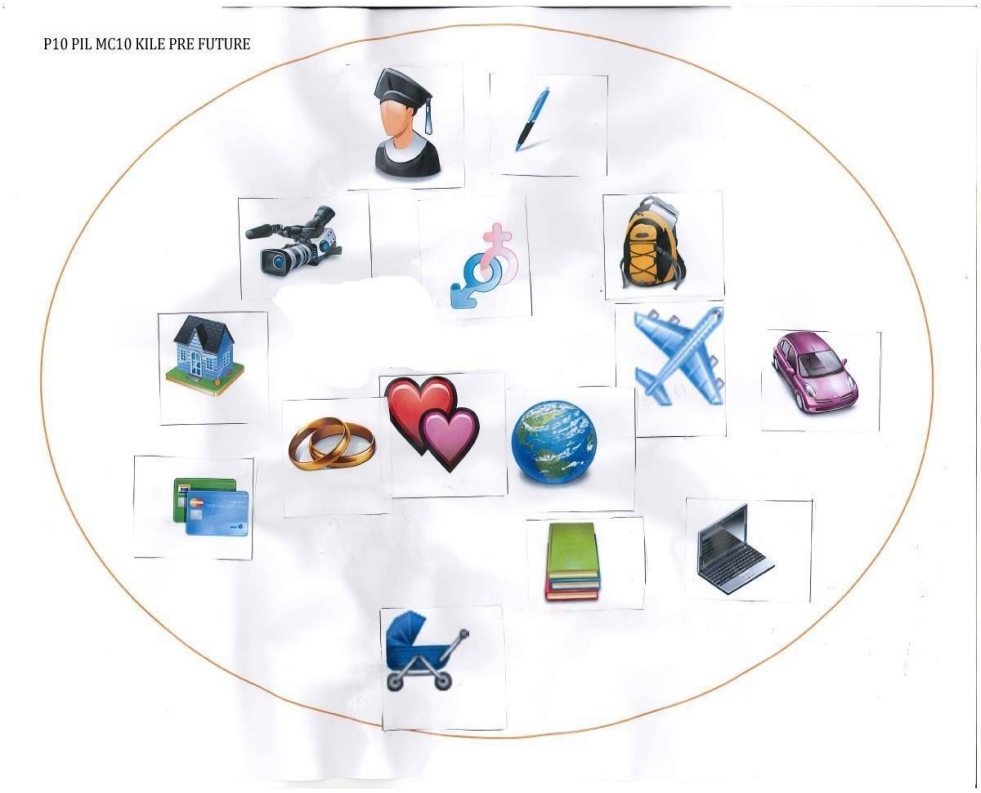


Figure 5.8. KILE (student) 1st occasion in the future.

The following two identitygrams (Figures 5.9 and 5.10) were made by the participants students identified as RYCK and STAC. Like KILE's, above, these two student identitygrams were made on the first occasion the researcher met with the students and show their prediction of their future identities.

5.6.2 Student RYCK

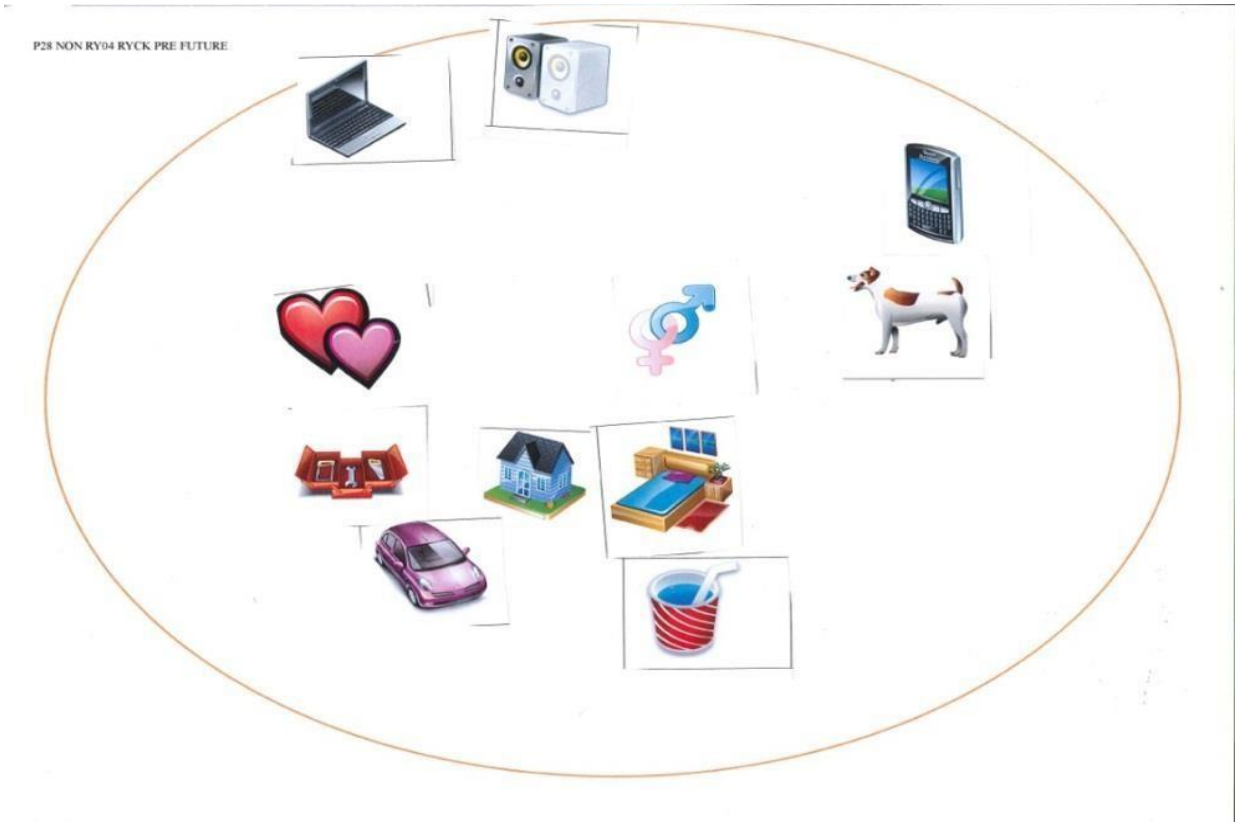


Figure 5.9. RYCK 1st occasion in the future.

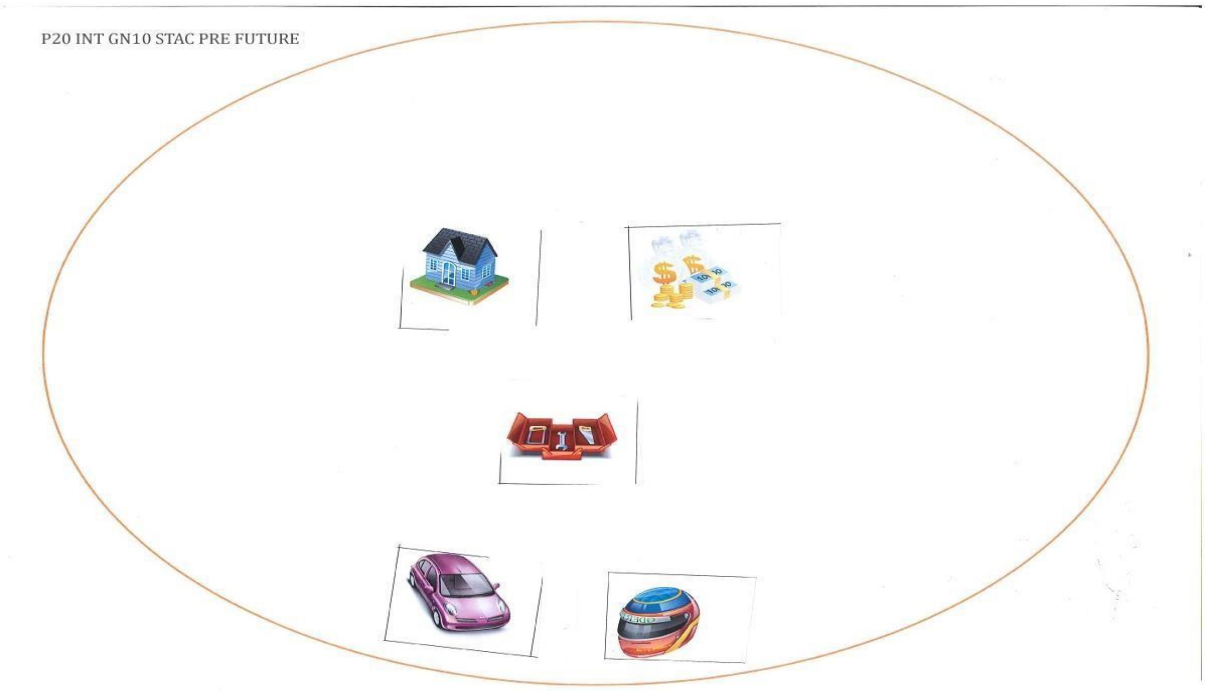


Figure 5.10. STAC 1st occasion in the future.

To compare the identitygrams of the groups of students attending schools located in communities experiencing disadvantage with those students attending the socially and economically average school, the education-related icons difference need to be considered. The first thing to note is the paucity of icons in STAC and RYCK's identitygrams compared to those in the previous example of KILE. This paucity indicates comparatively fewer active interests. Neither RYCK nor STAC used icons that depict formal education as an aspect of their future. Both RYCK and STAC depicted a toolkit, a practical icon illustrating an interest in a building trade, perhaps a vocation in the future; however, neither used the graduation certificate suggesting a more 'hands on' interest in making or constructing things. This also shows a lack of awareness that in today's society, 'working with your hands' in any skilled job requires literacy and numeracy and basic Vocational Education and Training (VET) certification. Is this lack of cultural understanding a reflection of the 'deprived' home and school context? Both used the car and the house icons illustrating that having these things in

the future were important yet owning these will require a financial status they are unlikely to achieve without some form of education or training.

Both RYCK and STAC's identitygrams depict aspects of how they see themselves in a future not related to continuing education. Their future identitygrams do not indicate a strong range of identity strengths or personal interests, however, they do indicate their interest in vocational studies. A vocational course pathway offers these students a participatory way forward in education and a way of achieving their economic aspirations. Access to a vocational trade course or similar would be crucial to these young men if they were to consider continuing in and completing a personally meaningful course of study in Years 11 and 12.

When analysing 'identity viability' as an aspect of education participation in Years 11 and 12, the researcher viewed the participants depictions of self-identity from the perspective of identity. This approach to interpreting the identitygram sees the representations through the lens of each participating student. The collage of pictures is thus a snap-shots taken of how each student portrayals themselves at that point in time and three years in the future.

The conceptual approach taken by this research views identity as part of a person's resources for living, as an asset constructing life meaning (Cote, 1997). A resource and asset-based approach to describing and interpreting the construct of identity allows the educational researcher to view the construction of identity developmentally and to speculate about the richness or paucity of school and family culture within which identity is constructed. It is hypothesised by this researcher that most young people do not think about aspects of their identity as 'capital' and therefore do not consider participation in learning as a process, nor educational attainment as an outcome of that process and an aspect of their personal capital. Does this mean these students have not learnt how to value education participation in this way?

As discussed in the literature review, disadvantage and poverty exacerbate the lack of information and limit access to knowledge about how education works as personal and social capital in families and in communities. This is why the student interviews with teachers as discussed in the next chapter, are so important. Teachers see and know first-hand how disadvantage impacts on individuals and their capacity to reach their potential. Teachers typically understands how the education system can build capacity and create education participation opportunities. This research study was focussed in how students living in situations of disadvantage and attending schools in disadvantaged communities understand the purpose of school and learning and how education as social capital serves them in their future life and their community. Knowing education as capital and knowing the power of learning is not 'fast learning' – it is part of the acquisition of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) and the preparation for living as productive and engaged member of the society (Taylor, & Rampino, 2014).

The more diverse icons of the non-government and higher SES school students reflected the greater cultural richness of their home and possibly school experiences. Through experiences, students experiment with who they are, participate, reflect about themselves and their strengths and learn what is possible (Bauman, 1992). The human, social, cultural and economic resources of the participating schools, located in disadvantaged communities were counted, along with their meaning and diversity. Each of these student participants could potentially have used education icons 48 times in their four identitygrams (twelve icons times the four identitygrams made by each participant).

As a group, the nine students from the two lower ICSEA government schools who chose to take part in the intervention course did not use education icons in their four identitygrams nine tenths of the time. These nine students used 43 education icons, or one tenth of those available to them to use; in 36 identitygrams. The eight student participants from the average

ICSEA status non-government school used 153 educational icons, or four tenths of those available to them in their 32 identitygrams. The collective non-use of education icons by the nine course-participant students attending the two schools located in communities experiencing disadvantage, appears to indicate that these students as a group had depicted a significantly less rich education identity than that of the non-government school students.

The next analysis considered the use of 'all category' icons. The two different student groups were similarly disparate in the 'all category' analysis. The ten students who had attended the non-government school used significantly more icons in their depictions of identity. Comparatively, the nine school students from the schools located in communities of disadvantage used, on average, used three times fewer icons to depict their identities. The non-government school students averaged 19.6 icon representations from all different categories of icons available to them in their depictions of identity. The nine student participants of the brief orientation course from the lower ICSEA government schools used, on average 5.9 icons in each of their identitygrams.

An important factor in comparing the use of the icons in representations of identity between these two groups of students is not only the level of disadvantage of their communities but also educational ambivalence. Educational ambivalence was defined in the research as showing indifference, disinterest or lacking conviction to engage in education after Year 10. This variable is consistent in relation to the two lower SES student participant sub-groups (those who participated in the brief intervention and those who did not) because it was part of the selection criteria for participation of all these students. All 14 of the students attending at the time the two lower SES high schools were selected and invited to take part in the research because they were perceived by their Year-level teacher as holding ambivalence towards the continuation of their studies through to Year 11.

Further research investigation comparing the use of education icons between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged student cohorts without 'ambivalence' as a variable would show whether this variable was a factor influencing the significant differences in icon use found in this research.

The comparison of the 'all categories' icon use between schools outlined above strongly suggests the socio-economic community of the school may influence adolescent students' identity viability and therefore how they will need to participate in senior secondary school. Certainly, the comparative paucity of the identitygrams made by the students from the schools located in communities experiencing disadvantage are concerning in terms of the limited options to link educational pathways with personal interests and strengths. The strength of viability and robust characteristics of identity provides to the developing individual a platform of strengths and interests from which to develop their capacities further, draw motivation for engagement, sustain interest and seek meaningful education participation in senior secondary Years 11 and 12.

In the following Chapter 6, research results reveal teachers views about educational factors influencing Year 10 students' decision whether or not to continue to Year 11 and changes needed to increase student engagement in education and training post Year 10 in Tasmania. This probed their perspective on the exosystemic, mesosystemic and microsystemic barriers students may experience in transition to participation in senior secondary school. Following the analysis and discussion of the teachers' insights, Chapter 7 examines student responses to the Brief Educational Intervention in relation to the analysis of identitygram data.

Chapter 6

6.1 Teachers' Interview Responses

This chapter applies the 'socio-ecological spheres of influence' framework to findings from ten adult participants' interviews. This Chapter examines the interview data with consideration of Research Question 3.

- What are the concerns of teachers for their students from disadvantaged communities transitioning into Year 11?

Each section discusses the findings as they relate to a sphere of socio-ecological influence on disadvantaged students' participation in senior secondary education. The findings discussed show that, for these participants, the spheres are not exclusive of each other and many of the themes raised by the teachers overlap two or three of the adapted Bronfenbrenner (1979; 1992) socio-ecological spheres. The teachers' responses represent their views on how education policy decisions, school, community and home circumstances influenced their students' from more economically disadvantaged homes, education participation decisions and outcomes.

6.2 Teacher Interview Questions

The ten teacher participants either taught at and/or provided teacher support services at schools located in communities of disadvantage. These schools were the same schools the student participants attended. Five of the teachers were 'pathway planners' with teacher qualifications whose role at that time did not involve direct face to face teaching in schools. Four of the participants were Year 10 direct face-to-face teachers from two separate schools, and one participant was a secondary school principal. All the teachers were, at that time, employed in Tasmanian public schools. Six female and four male teachers took part.

The guiding questions used in the interviews were:

- What educational factors do you believe influence young people's decision whether to continue to Year 11?
- What types of high school programs and interventions do you believe can be effective in retaining young people in education and training post Year 10?
- Can you provide an example?
- Are you aware of any difficulties or barriers young people experience in following their Year 11 academic and/or vocational education plan?
- Focused on the students who may not complete Year 11, in your professional experience, what behaviours and characteristics would identify young people who belong to this group?
- What systemic change is needed to increase student engagement in education and training post Year 10 in Tasmania?

The software program used to analyse the interview data was NVivo -12 (2016). The first stage of the analysis process took an inductive approach that involved coding the entire (approximately twelve hours) interview transcripts. Coding the entire contents of the interviews increases the methodological validity and limits the potential for coding bias (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). 'Nodes' were created by analysing the content of paragraphs or sentences and identifying thematic relations. The process worked sentence by sentence through the data and identified whether a thematic 'chunk' of narrative content linked to an existing thematic node or whether the comment required a new node because the chunk had no thematic relationship with an existing thematic node. Taking this approach to the data analysis was consistent with a methodology known as grounded theory approach (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

Themes gradually emerged as the ideas, attitudes and opinions the teachers expressed were coded. The process of open coding and a grounded theory approach established 28 thematic nodes. Figure 6.1, following, is a screen shot taken of the NVivo program. The screen shot following lists the 28 thematic nodes created in the thematic analysis. Axial coding was the process used to progress coding from the first stage inductive analysis (grounded theory) to the second stage deductive (socio-ecological) analysis. Axial coding reassembled the data in a way that drew attention to the relationships between the twenty-eight data themes and the three socio-ecological data categories (Wicks, 2010).

Figure 6.1. Thematic data nodes.

The following sections of this chapter discuss the thematic findings from the teacher interviews using sequential socio-ecologic spheres of influence to guide the analysis.

6.3 Teachers' responses

The teacher respondents' comments about the microsystems of their students were concerned mainly with how the micro-system of home affected students' capacity to learn at school. Most of the teachers felt they had a strong understanding of the difficult circumstances many of their students faced in their home lives.

"There's a whole range of anxieties and stresses for kids that nobody would understand unless you got inside the heads of these kids." (Teacher Support Year10 students)

The teachers expressed concern about what they described as the social, cultural and experiential deprivation some of the young people at their schools experienced and indicated how important it was to expose disadvantaged students to a range of different experiences to enrich their broader understanding of the opportunities available to them in the world. The teachers believed that many students who experienced disadvantage at home needed school to counter their resulting education deprivation (Byrne, 1996), as expressed in the identitygrams of the students from the participating schools located in disadvantaged communities. In schools located in more socially and culturally advantaged communities, the human resources families or community members brought to the school supplemented and augmented the school through social and cultural capital (Ho & Willms, 1996; Stevenson & Stigler 1992), school funds and additional extra-curricular human resources. Disadvantaged communities just did not have any extra for the school because of their own limited resources and the existing stress and demand on those resources.

Given more resources, the teachers believed many students attending schools located in disadvantaged communities would have benefitted greatly from additional school activities to provide identity enrichment experiences. Such experiences promote education participation (as a major social determinant of health), healthy lifestyles choices, recreation,

social and cultural activities and pro-social behaviour. The teachers believed that many of their students would also have benefitted from the increase in positive adult occupational role models such enrichment experiences offered. They considered that such experiences created opportunities for students to develop confidence through their relationships with a range of different people, who offered positive role models.

High levels of social and economic disadvantage occur in urban pockets in Tasmania. The teachers who took part in the study taught at three schools located in such urban pockets. The teachers believed that their schools could have played a more pivotal role in the lives of their students by promoting broader inclusion confidence and education participation confidence. The teachers commented how many Tasmanian public schools had families who did not have the means or the ways to enrich identity through experiences. The teachers believed that, given more resources, schools could provide vulnerable students from stressed communities with a stronger foundation to education participation, to know strengths and capacities and to form the foundation for adult social inclusion, work and community participation. When the home culture and climate was learning hostile and resource stressed it becomes critical that school promote and provide a positive culture and climate for learning (Ho & Willms, 1996).

The teachers reported that many young people in Year 10 had little self-knowledge of their strengths and interests, who they were and what interested them. This was even more so for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. With limited access to experiences and limited opportunity to gain self-knowledge and understanding of personal strengths and capacities at home, culturally impoverished students needed school to provide such opportunities. The teachers believed this process of learning and building an educational identity and students understanding and perceiving this knowledge acquisition as capital could ahvebegun in Year 7 and built through the secondary school years and beyond. Teachers believed the foundation

of experience and knowledge provided throughout Years 7 to 10 facilitated Years 11 and 12 participation. School, they thought, was an important place for many of their students because it often provided the missed-at-home opportunities needed to develop a robust and viable platform of identity; an identity from which to launch future education participation. The teachers expressed the opinion that at that time in their own schools, direct knowledge instruction was not sufficient.

The following comments were made by the teachers about how home deprivation impacted on the way students reacted and coped at school and how this affected students' capacity to concentrate on learning.

"If you don't engage with the learning now, you're going to be so far behind that you're actually not going to enter the subjects you want to do in Years 11 and 12, ... I'm not seeing the aspiration there. But there's no driver for wanting to do well." (Support Teacher Year10)

"They're not hungry to learn, and if you look at their external circumstances, there's a whole heap of things going on for some of them, you can see why. (Teacher Year 10)

"They have lost their aspiration." (Teacher Year10)

The teachers believed that the social and cultural capital of disadvantaged students could often create education participation limitations and act negatively. For the socially and economically disadvantaged students, their personal network of parents, relatives and friends may not have had the capacity to offer them support or information. This may have been because the adults in their microsystem had their own limited or negative experiences, or perhaps had a sense that they, themselves, failed at school. Sometimes families unintentionally sabotaged or denigrated what they may have seen as their child's 'unusual' education efforts and aspirations. The following comments by the teachers and support

teachers relate to students' home-life, relationships with teachers and educational engagement.

"And they trust us, like family, the majority of them and in some cases more than their family." (Teacher Year10)

"Issues around anxiety and often they're a product of that home environment, which is something really hard to measure in any kind of meaningful way." (Support Teacher Year 10)

"A whole range of things that in some middle class families you get just three conversations at home, but for a lot of kids there are no conversations around that [education] stuff. There may be three generations of low literacy, never completing school." (Principal Year 7-10 School)

"These kids, you know, most have had the stuffing kicked out of them for years by everyone." (Teacher Year10)

The teachers indicated to the researcher that for their disadvantaged students, 'course changing' behaviour in Year 11 was commonplace and that this often disguised the underlying education participation barrier of identity deprivation, as discussed previously. Knowing personal capacities, interests and competency strengths was utilised in senior secondary education participation decision-making. The teachers also perceived that a possible link between changing subjects and/or courses behaviour in Year 11 and an increased likelihood of education disengagement needed further research. If future research establishes this link, schools and teachers would be able to identify, and justify, the need to initiate early intervention. If future data were to indicate students' changing course behaviour and eventual education disengagement lacked the needed 'stickability' (Abbott-Chapman, 2015) to make personally viable and sustainable course and subject decisions for Year 11,

the identitygram approach may provide teachers with an early diagnostic tool. Thus, the tool may assist teachers to identify students in Year 10 who present as uncertain, ambiguous and diffident about whether their capacities and interests equip them sufficiently to sustain them through Years 11 and 12.

Identity literature suggests that making viable and sustainable study choices for senior secondary school depends on the capacity of students to make a connection between their identity self-understanding and the Year 11 and 12 learning opportunities available to them. The data from the previous chapter indicates that for many students from the schools located in areas experiencing disadvantage, this identity connection may be quite limited dimensionally or may lack viability. For example, the two male students who identified with very few viable interests except for a toolbox, in Chapter 5, expressed low education participation aspirations which might be raised by showing them the connection between Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and enlarging their knowledge in that respect. The results presented in Chapter 5 suggested to the researcher that these students present as part of an identifiable cohort of junior secondary students which may benefit from an education intervention aimed at making a connection between their identity self-understanding and the Years 11 and 12 learning opportunities available.

6.4 Context of Disadvantage

Most of the teachers indicated to the researcher that they believed the effect of social and economic disadvantage on their students was significant. They felt concern that the disparity between students attending schools located in communities of disadvantage and those students attending schools in advantaged communities often led to stigmatisation and lower educational expectations for students who attended schools in low socio-economic communities. The teachers also spoke of how financial and social disadvantage affects

students' capacities to concentrate and learn; for example, they said it was not uncommon for some young people to come to school hungry and/or stressed about the hardship occurring at home.

Considering the financial barriers many Tasmanian students faced in participating in Years 11 and 12 education, the teachers believed that senior secondary schools in Tasmania not having a student 'uniform' was a potential barrier to the education participation of those young people from families experiencing poverty because there are times when students did not have a change of clothes to wear. The teachers said that some of their students may have had only one acceptable set of clothes and if this was dirty then they stayed home rather than feeling the shame and/or being stigmatised or bullied. The teacher respondents who raised this concern suggested a practical, equitable and inclusive solution. They believed the provision of one or two basic items of school clothing for all young people attending senior secondary school, regardless of their family's income, would cost very little yet have a genuine positive effect on all students' sense of feeling connected to their school. The teachers expressed the opinion that there were many social inclusion advantages when the students from disadvantaged areas were supported by low cost strategies to enable them to attend secondary school without stigmatisation and shame. Stigmatisation can occur if students from poor families feel they identified as 'different' within the student population.

"When the kids go to college where there is not a uniform and they've got one set of clothes, which is actually problematic for some disadvantaged kids." (Year 10 teacher)

The social adolescent population 'pooling' of Tasmanian senior secondary students at Year 11 and 12 campuses was thought by the teacher respondents to be beneficial and positive for their students coming to these campuses from Years 7 -10 schools located in disadvantaged communities. The teachers believed the separate larger campuses brought together students from different socio-demographic and social status suburbs and this

served an important role in developmental socialisation and educating young people for tolerance and inclusion. They believed the students benefited from learning about and being part of a more diverse yet inclusive school community. 'Social pooling' in senior secondary schools creates a more inclusive environment because the population is more representative of diverse groups within the Tasmanian community. In this way, Tasmanian secondary school communities were thought better able to provide and demonstrate anti-oppressive and inclusive practices so those sometimes-marginalised groups, such as young people with different sexual orientation, new arrivals from other countries and socially and economically disadvantaged young people, experienced positive regard and were valued within the broader Tasmanian community. With good school policies, social support and education, the bringing together of this wide mix of students from a range of different socio-economic backgrounds and cultures and sub-cultures was having a positive ripple effect on all students' well-being, including their mental health. The teachers spoke of important social justice and inclusion understandings learnt through peer- and teacher-led role modelling.

"The students from more privileged backgrounds have come from a more successful learning environment previously and brought in a lot of good habits and some strong relationships and I think just the, you know, that there's the positive impact and it's a knock-on thing, you know." (Teacher Year 10)

One teacher spoke about how, for students from impoverished backgrounds, just being in a school community around different groups of students had the potential to broaden interests and present new opportunities for young people to explore different and perhaps alternative ideas. The teachers believed their students' exposure to different ideas had a positive influence on what were often self-limiting attitudes and behaviours. They indicated that when students were able to successfully transition to a separate and larger senior

secondary school campus, this broadened their outlook, enriched their social and educational experiences and had a positive impact on their future. For some of those students who had participated in this research, their public housing estate community and its people constructed the boundaries of what they knew.

"Their parents haven't got the strategies of skills or financial support, to be able to, help them make that move (to Year 11 and 12) (Year 10 Support Teacher)

The teachers believed that many parents of disadvantaged students living in impoverished communities felt intimidated by schools and teachers and did not know how the education system worked. One teacher said that if the time or energy was not there for parents and /or guardians to be interested in and support the education endeavours of children in their care, then this had a very negative influence on student's motivation to participate actively in school.

"If we know a kid's coming to school and they're not fed and they get here at twenty past nine, the first thing we'll do is go and make a hot chocolate and have a toasted sandwich, if we know that a kid has been stressed in trauma over the weekend or something like that, or they come in and they've got something to share, then there's no point sending them into a classroom to try and engage with something, some days we do a good job of it, some days we get it wrong and you know, if we're not in the right frame of mind, we can push the wrong buttons." (Teacher Year 10)

"Seventy per cent of our kids were identified as having low literacy, low numeracy or poor attendance that is across the school and then on top of that, there's a number of kids that attend school, can read and can write, but they have a whole lot of things difficult things going on for them [at home]." (Principal, Years 7 -10 school)

"Well, suburbs are looked upon in a certain light I think, by sort of people in general around Hobart and Tassie, probably more widely. We've got this stereo, this perpetuated stereo type of what kind of school this is, and the kids take that on-board and they hear it and they say it and they joke about it, oh well, I'm only from [name of school] you know." (Teacher, Year 10)

The responses from the teachers about the senior secondary participation barriers faced by disadvantaged students provided a surprisingly positive picture of what they thought might be possible if school-based change strategies were implemented. The teachers believed schools and teachers could make a positive difference to the lives of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. When the microsystem of the student is resource poor and/or under stress, and/or the local community is stressed and under-resourced, teachers thought that schools need to step forward in influence. The teachers believed it is the responsibility of the school to broaden students' understanding of the world, their self-perceptions, out looks and decision-making capacity and by doing so, augment and conduit social and educational potential and opportunity.

For many students living in disadvantaged communities their potential for future educational success may lie predominantly in their schooling. The teachers believed that school was an important part of all students' communities of support and encouragement, but even more so for students living in families experiencing social and economic stress or even dysfunction. For some students, their school was the only environment that provided them with access to positive, enabling relationships, new experiences and positive participation opportunities.

The teachers supposed that many of their students transitioning from Year 10 lacked senior secondary school study preparation skills and that often the students in the schools located in communities of disadvantage missed learning some fundamental skills for

personal learning management and learning. Sometimes, they said, basic literacy and numeracy foundation skills taught in primary and junior secondary school were just missed. The teachers stated that without these essential study and personal skills the students could not succeed in school at senior secondary level. As a remedial solution, two teachers offered their opinion that senior secondary schools could offer students who had performed poorly in junior secondary school a personal management and study skills catch-up subject in Year 11. The teachers also considered many students needed to be better supported in Years 7 through to 10 with one-on-one literacy and numeracy. They also spoke of the importance of one-on-one adult relationships to build emotional regulation and concentration skills, believing that often, their students lacked these self-regulatory and cognition skills. The teachers knew that these skills were normally taught at home, but without these skills, students were unable to educationally succeed at senior secondary school and then go on to actively participate in work and community as adults.

"Kids that don't have those (basic study skills) are the ones that are not going to succeed because, it's like going out to work, you can teach somebody skills, you can't teach them as an employer, problem solving communication, thinking, social responsibility, it's an assumption that they will have those things." (Students' Support Teacher, Years 10 and 11)

The teachers supposed that many students would be more likely to experience success in Years 11 and 12 if assessment was through applied learning approaches. Applied learning prioritises the demonstration of knowledge and skills (for example, in vocationally based training) above the capacity to memorise knowledge and theory (for example, in pre-tertiary subjects). Applied learning-oriented programs and courses were considered by the teachers interviewed as having better engagement potential and increased future viability for many young people, but particularly students from disadvantaged backgrounds. For students from schools located in communities of disadvantage the teachers thought applied learning was

both viable and complementary to other general studies in Years 11 and 12. Three main reasons were identified: (1) applied learning provided incremental (AQF 1-3) learning and assessment; (2) once a qualification level was completed, it created a clearly articulated pathway to future qualifications and future education at RTOs including TasTAFE and University studies; and (3) the outcomes from vocational training qualifications facilitated immediate access to work opportunities. The teachers also explained that applied learning suited fewer academic students because it focuses on demonstrating capacity.

For those students applying for entry into a vocational course in Year 11 the first competitive step in gaining access is the VET suitability process. The teachers described students as anxious and overwhelmed by the requirement of an interview to enter vocational training. They indicated that interview preparation and preliminary visits to the senior Years and 12 college were vitally important to assist these students in feeling able to develop strategies to cope with their feelings of anxiety and to build familiarity with a new learning environment. Even though the teachers believed that their students' successful access to VET courses in Years 11 and 12 could be a major factor determining their education outcome success in Years 11 and 12, the teachers told the researcher that their students were often unsuccessful when they applied for a place in a vocational course. An exemplary comment made by a teacher in relation to their students' access to VET in Years 11 and 12 was:

"The kids had to go and sit an exam to get into the VET course they wanted, because they had too many, I'm like, 'you're kidding me'. Now this is their chosen pathway, so we're going to put them in their second-best choice, that they're not really going to want and then we expect them to still stay there [in Year 11 in school]!" (Teacher Year 10)

The teachers indicated that when planning with students for participation after Year 12, each individual student in Years 9 and 10 needed support to look forward to Year 11 and 12 and beyond. The teacher respondents spoke of their endeavours to assist students struggling

with transition from Year 10 to Year11, noting that it was common for their students to be reluctant and anxious about this transition. The teachers deemed this anxiety would be alleviated if they were able to take their students regularly in small groups to the Years 11 and 12 campus to hear about and sample available courses and meet potential teachers. The teachers said the initiatives needed to go beyond 'taster' days. Students disadvantaged by home situations often decided not to participate in interview processes or 'taster' days through fear of the unfamiliar and fear of ridicule. 'Saving face' seemed important to young people who had less investment in education participation.

"For some students the interview to gain entry into the course creates a barrier to participation because of inexperience and lack of confidence having to be interviewed creates feelings of likely failure, inadequacy and high anxiety." (Teacher, Year 10)

Options for students wanting to undertake vocational training are limited by the number of trade and vocationally trained teachers, trade training facilities and funding resources of the Years 11 and 12 colleges. TasTAFE is the State government's adult VET provider in Tasmania. If a student is not successful in entering a Year 11 school-based VET course, they will sometimes try to gain an apprenticeship or join an adult class at TasTAFE or another Recognised Training Organisation (RTO). The teachers stated that most Year 10 students were simply not developmentally ready or equipped to study vocational learning and training as independent learners in an adult learning environment. In addition, placing adolescents into VET settings that took them away from other young people their own age increased the students' risk of non-completion.

The teachers stated that the limitation on places available to students in Years 11 and 12 to undertake AQF VET Level II and III courses at school impacted negatively on retention and attainment levels for senior secondary education. The teachers believed that if more VET places were to be made available in the future, these places needed to closely align to

predicted student demand in a secondary school setting. The teachers recognised there were resource and funding constraints and suggested that to overcome these constraints, a memorandum of understanding with the State government's vocational organisation would facilitate resource sharing and cooperative arrangements to access trade training facilities and qualified vocationally trained teachers.

"But our school goes up there for a science/maths thing, not too many get to find out about VET pathways; and so, it comes back to money, like our high school next year apparently hasn't got the money to support the Taste of VET program, so our students won't be participating" (Teacher Year 10)

The teachers described how important it was that participation orientation experiences not cost schools, disadvantaged students or their families. The fees charged by the Tasmanian government's public education provider (TasTAFE), for students' pre-study and taster experiences were regarded by the teachers as inequitable because they posed prohibitive costs on economically and socially disadvantaged schools and their students. Most importantly, the teachers believed all secondary school campuses needed to develop ways they could work together and use their combined resources to enhance the educational experiences and participation for all young people in education up to Year 12. The teachers described each college campus as potentially the Years 11 and 12 hubs of their local secondary school community. They supposed that strengthening the structure and strategic connections between local area junior secondary schools and their local area senior secondary school utilised and built on the resource strengths of urban secondary schools. This model described by the teachers was best was described as an 'area clustered secondary school campus. The teachers regarded this clustering of campuses approach as a practical and operational way of facilitating cooperative endeavours, strategic operations and maximising the use of facilities and human resources.

6.5 Education Participation

As discussed earlier, the teachers talked about the need for junior secondary schools in disadvantaged communities to become more active in the mesosystem of students by creating and maximising cultural, social and recreational learning opportunities in addition to foundational learning. They thought that to do this, schools needed to take their students regularly out of the classroom in small groups and give them access to and facilitate 'rich' immersion learning experiences in the broader community. The teachers considered students' inclusion in social activities, sports, recreational and community activities were of utmost importance, particularly for students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

'Rich' learning experiences that connected students with the environment beyond the school were opportunities for students to connect with community and culture; for example, learning more about what is good citizenship and broadening their understanding of different careers and occupations and how subjects like mathematics English, communication and technology was used in work settings. The teachers believed these types of experiences would enable their students (who they believed had little opportunity to know what exists outside their own community) to see how what they learnt about at school applied in life, in practical and participatory ways. This thinking is supported by several Tasmanian research projects (Abbott-Chapman et al., 2013). These types of immersion activities and extensions to classroom learning and curriculum-based learning would connect learning participation, in particularly senior secondary learning, in 'real' ways that made them meaningful and enabled students to understand and contextualise potential future pathways through study and training to work and adult life. The teachers also recognised that schools were about preparing students for a changing workforce and that schools had an important role to

provide students with the thinking, social and communication skills that would scaffold their community participation and citizenship.

"Two of our most successful areas or programs happen in the foods and catering area, where there's actually a commercial aspect to what they do. They supply lunches and the café's open for business and actually caters to the community and so there's a real, an authentic kind of aspect to that program that provides something a little bit outside of just school." (Teacher Year 10)

"Exposing kids to things outside of the school and supporting kids to feel safe because thinking about these educational factors, there's a whole heap of things around fear, we went for the first time and five of those kids said I want to go back to our school right now, as soon as they walked in the door, because it was just so overwhelming. So, having a negative experience at that point, determines whether a kid wants to continue on with their education." (Support Teacher Year 10)

The teachers commented positively on the wide array of enrichment short courses and specialised subjects and courses for students available at senior secondary school. The teachers maintained that supportive guidance helped students decide on what was right for their participation. Purposeful and strategic guidance enabled students to identify specialised activities and learning that built on personal strengths and interests.

"I'd be amazed if he didn't get to senior secondary school next year and, you know, he already plays in a couple of bands, but I'd be amazed if he didn't get wind of the music program that, that's run down there and find out I can do that, you know, some studio engineering." (Support Teacher Year 10)

"They need to start planning personal learning younger, start in Grade 7. I know a school in Western Australia, which starts in Grade 7 with that model of connecting with what

the kids are interested in. It doesn't have to be that everything connects with what the kid's interested in, but something has to be worthwhile for them."(Support teacher Year 10)

"So where is there PD between the senior secondary schools and the high school's Year 10 teachers? To make what are you doing in Year 10 complement Year 11?" (Teacher Year 10)

6.6 Practical Support

Teachers indicated that the home-to-school and school-to-school transport in Tasmania needed to change. One teacher suggested that the secondary schools, and their associated Year 11 and 12 college be on a bus loop, so students became familiar with the route and with their peers attending different secondary campuses who also lived in their area. Just catching a bus on an unfamiliar route, with unfamiliar people seemed to be a significant barrier for some students.

"This year I identified about six of our kids whose attendance is really poor, we want to try and reconnect them prior to senior secondary school next year." (Year 7-10 School Principal)

"It's having someone to help them, this is the person you go to if you're having any hassles, even the really resilient ones in first term at Year 11 nearly drop out. If your locker is in a place where you don't know anybody … all these people, and no idea who they are." (Year 7-10 School Principal)

"The whole system of transport and all of that, then needs to move around those high schools and then also the college campus so with the kids staying on the bus, it's going to end up at college anyway. So really what we would be doing is making the kids be in and out of that campus space throughout their (junior) high schools for a range of things, so when

they go there to the other campus it's just an extension of what they were doing before." (Year 7-10 School Principal)

All the teachers made comments on the first experiences of students at senior secondary school and suggested ways to facilitate transition, strengthen social connections and build the confidence of students. They noted that both the high schools and the senior schools and their teachers needed to communicate more and to be better coordinated around the delivery of general subjects such as STEM (Science, Technology, English and Math). Better communication between junior and senior secondary schools would reduce the current situation where students often experienced school dislocation and teachers did not have a shared understanding of their different school expectations and roles.

"I would take the Grade 10s to a senior secondary school for at least a term, if not more for their whole schooling in Grade 10. I actually think they should be transitioning for a significant amount of time. Because it's huge, you know, primary to high school is a big step, but this step, it's to the great big wide open world." (Teacher Year 10)

"Even if it's a day a week, that you go meet your teacher, you know, I remember the Education Support used to say, why can't a teacher from the college come with the kids for at least a term." (Teacher Year 10)

"For two weeks running one of our students didn't go to college, contacted us and we found out that he had no idea of which bus to get on, his mum didn't speak English, so she couldn't read any of the information we'd sent home and he was a typical teenage boy, didn't know really what he was meant to do, pretty vague, and so one teacher had to go and meet him at his house, get on the bus with him, explain how much money he would need each day, go up to the college with him on the bus, stay there and work out which bus, that's a

huge commitment from a school, to send their teacher to make it happen." (Year7-10 School Principal)

6.7 Teachers' role and Community

Each respondent commented on the crucial role of teachers in helping students to become interested in knowing their personal capacities and strengths, to identify future learning and work training pathways and to transition to senior secondary school successfully. The role of being a teacher was having both an individual and a community development responsibility. The respondents maintained that teachers have an important role to play in changing community attitudes and understanding to post-Year 10 participation.

"Decision making, all of those things, problem solving, the kids aren't aware of those things and how to go about, you know, because they're the kinds of skills they need to negotiate and get through senior secondary school successfully". (Teacher Year10)

"Senior secondary school is nothing like high school, so if you're over school the good news is school is over, you know, you'll be treated like an adult when you walk into senior secondary school, you know, you'll wear the clothes you want, pick the subjects you want you know, it will be your world and that's one of the great, I think, one of the great pluses of having a separate senior secondary school system, is that you can, you know, when you, when you have that dialogue with a student, you can persuade them with a positive, with a positive thing." (Support Teacher Year 10)

Several of the teachers talked about the need to teach personal management skills to students as part of senior secondary orientation. They considered that there were many demands on students at adolescence and students needed the thinking skills to juggle many additional and sometimes competing demands on them in their senior secondary school years.

"Some kids that, that can do their heads in, you know, they've got this new freedom and there's a lot more social activity, there's a lot more, they've probably got a part time job, you know, and all this sort of stuff and all of a sudden the demands on their time really, they don't know how to manage that stuff." (Teacher Year10)

"And I think we need to be a bit more explicit for them in terms of teaching those other skill sets, like your organisation, your planning, your time management." (Support Teacher Year 10)

One teacher spoke about the power of an inspirational teacher. Sometimes a teacher can make the difference between a student leaving at the end of Year 10 and continuing to Years 11 and 12.

"Who's delivering that curriculum has got as much to do with the success of the student's transitioning prospects as the curriculum itself, I think. I mean it might be the case, where, you know, where the transitional prospects of some of the students in some cases, can be directly proportional to the rapport that they have with the teaching staff and the teaching staff's ability to enthuse that student to continue to engage in education." (Student Support Teacher Year 10)

Four teachers discussed the importance of students having adequate literacy and numeracy before going from junior secondary school to senior secondary school. They stated that when students presented in senior secondary school without adequate literacy and numeracy skills, there should be services provided by specialist teachers to assist these Year 11 students.

"I think it's one of the educational factors for people's success at Grade 11 and 12. If they're not leaving high school with, I guess, those basic literacy and numeracy skills, then

they're already set up for failure I think, because it's just expected that you'll have those things when you get off, go beyond school". (Student Support Teacher Year 10)

Three teacher participants made specific comment on the broader Tasmanian community's attitude in relation to Years 11 and 12 participation. They noted how negative attitudes towards schooling were prevalent in some families. This was particularly the case in those families where the parents themselves may not have participated in Years 11 and 12 studies and/or older siblings had completed Year 12.

"Lots of our kids reports don't get home, so you don't have to – you have to do the mid-year report, you know, weeks after the mid-year report, we've still got reports sitting in the school. So those parents don't value education or those parents have so much going on in their life that, you know, what the school report is, you know, is irrelevant or they know it's going to be bad so they don't actually want to read it and confirm it, that things are running really badly for their child." (Teacher Year 10)

"They might be the oldest in the family and…no-one else has been to senior secondary school ahead of them as an older brother or sister to sort of tell them about it. So, I think that senior secondary school familiarity is, is very important." (Students' Support Teacher, Year 10)

One respondent indicated how important community-based information experiences were to the transitioning school students from communities with negative attitudes to education participation. This teacher said that families from their school needed information to develop an understanding of the education system and the types of learning experiences available to their children in Years 11 and 12. Several other teachers also suggested that students from their schools needed the information and orientation to be oriented towards streams of study, not narrow courses and subjects. The teachers believed that aiming for a

career (rather than an area of work) could set students up to fail. The teachers described the culture of Tasmania's Years 11 and 12 campuses and teacher/student relationships as an attractive option for students who had resisted and not liked the strict rules and more hierarchical structure of junior secondary school. They claimed that some Year 10 students welcomed the more 'adult culture' of the senior secondary school.

"It needs to be, well it has to be, relevant to what the kids want to learn, because if the kids don't see the relevance of it, they're going to say, why bother." (Teacher Year 10)

The embedded community acceptance of young people leaving school before Year 12 was described by the respondents as a significant challenge for Tasmania. They urged the Tasmanian government to respond with a community education promotion, strategy and campaign.

"I think there's still an attitude, and this is outside the actual education system, but there's an attitude at home in a lot of instances, that's kind of along the lines of well you know, I had to do Year 10 or you can leave school when you're sixteen or you can get an apprenticeship or whatever it might be, so actually resetting people's or resetting the community expectations around what, you know, what constitutes your education in Tasmania would be worthwhile; you would need a real big magic wand to do that I think." (Teacher Year 10)

School is an important part of all students' community of support and encouragement, but so much more so for students living in families experiencing social and economic stress. For some students, school may be the only environment that facilitates access to positive participation opportunities. These opportunities may otherwise not be possible because of limited resources.

Eight of the teachers stated that the new government strategy for more 7-10 secondary schools to go through from Year 7 to Year 12 would not increase education attainment in the urban Tasmanian setting. They indicated the strategy would be helpful in increasing the Years 11 and 12 education participation of Tasmanian students living in more isolated rural Tasmanian settings. Five of the respondents volunteered a prediction that the new strategy extending Years 11 and 12 to more secondary schools may increase Year 11 retention rates state-wide yet decrease the percentage of students who attain Year 12 state-wide. The teachers expressed the opinion that the unique Tasmanian campus separation of Years 7- 10 from Years 11-12 in an urban setting had many advantages as more subjects could be offered and so cater for the students wanting to progress on to university as well as those students who needed more alternative programs. They considered these advantages to be at risk of becoming nullified by the current government policy to make all Years 7-10 schools cater for students up to Year 12. Currently many different students from a range of Year 7-10 schools amalgamate to attend one of the eight Year 11 and 12 campuses around the state. The teachers spoke about the different nature of the student/teacher relationships and the wider range of specialist study and recreational options available at Year 11 and 12 campuses. They believed this range was made possible by the critical mass of students that converges to attend senior campuses from several different catchment junior secondary schools, particularly in urban Tasmania. It was both the number of students and their diversity that made possible the many specialist course and enrichment study opportunities. The teachers noted this scope of subjects would not be fully offered if the small number of students involved, staying on at their local 7-10 junior secondary school.

Regarding VET options and enrichment learning for their students, the teachers indicated that the training facilities for VET options suited the more independent and adult culture of senior secondary Years 11 and 12 campuses. The teachers also highlighted the

wide range of enrichment options available at the senior secondary schools, such as special interest clubs, sports, arts, cooking, drama, bush walking, kayaking, tennis, and athletics. Such a range of options had a snowball effect, further enriching and building the identity constructs of young people.

"And that's the other advantage with a separate senior secondary school system is that, because of that we've got something like two hundred course offerings for students at senior secondary school. ...in comparison to mainland schools the course offerings (for Years 11 and 12 in Tasmania) are about a quarter of what they are here." (Year 10 Teacher)

Two teachers expressed the view that anxiety was a problem for some of the Year 10 students. Having Year 10 students with psychological and/or mental health issues able to 'stay put' in their local high school was a better approach than shifting these students to a larger senior school. Some teachers; however, also expressed concern that by giving students the option to stay in a Year 7-10 campus environment to undertake Years 11 and 12 studies, would lead to many students simply taking this option because it was perceived as an easier option than college. Several teachers indicated that some students wanted to stay in schooling as a way of meeting the compulsory school attendance requirements for the federal government's Youth Allowance. As discussed in Chapter 3, many young people over 16 years of age in Tasmania are individually in receipt of a student allowance and their attendance at school (not their education outcomes) is required to be eligible to receive the benefit. The teachers were concerned that eventually the Tasmanian government's 'all schools to Year 12 policy' would see only the poor and non-academic students staying on at the existing secondary campuses and academically oriented students attending more elite Year 11 and 12 college campuses.

"The thing I found in a 7-12 school is they had to kind of put things together on the run, and they had all students in one classroom, all the 11's and 12's, so it wasn't even a proper

Year 11 and 12 class, you know, and they were just learning individually." (Teacher Year 10)

"If all the schools go Year 11 and 12, the colleges will inevitably close or will just house the very academically bright, which is inappropriate." (Support Teacher, Year 10)

"Our school absolutely does not believe having Years 11 and 12 attached to our school would increase transition at all; in fact, some kids who have become disengaged with us we've actually been able to re-engage them with the college, because they have gone beyond this community, they want a fresh start, they are young adults and they want to be treated as young adults. There is no way this school would ever be able to provide the fantastic facilities that College has, you know, very specialised teachers, very specialised facilities, we'd have a cut down, second rate version, of Years 11 and 12, and I will not tolerate that." (Year 10 Teacher)

The socio-environmental and systemic issues related to disadvantage are complex. The way these issues influence adolescent education decision-making and participation are also complex. Nonetheless, the insights provided by the ten teacher participants were important to informing how the next step in the investigation was taken. The teachers confirmed that their students attending schools located in areas of disadvantage were at much higher risk of disengaging from senior secondary school in Years 11 and 12. The teachers recognised that their students needed more learning opportunities and experiences to help make up for their comparative educational disadvantage, but their schools lacked the resources to provide what the students needed. The teachers understood the VET system offered many of their students real participation opportunities through work-real and meaningful participation opportunities in later secondary school.

The teachers raised concerns about VET courses offered to young people at training facilities located away from their secondary school and away from their adolescent peer group. They noted that peer contact during adolescence and the social development opportunities offered at secondary school were too important for young people to miss out on. The teachers also mentioned several school-to-work transition programs such as the Beacon program, a non-government organisation building students' connections between industry and education participation (Beacon Foundation, 2017). The Beacon delivery model is different to traditional school-based vocational education models in that it recognises the importance of industry networks to connect young people to work and focuses on applied teaching and learning practices (Beacon Foundation, 2017). The teachers were able to observe and identify educational ambivalence in junior secondary students. Importantly the teachers maintained that they were able to identify possible students from their schools located in disadvantaged areas who seemed unsure of their future participation in education. From this perspective the teachers identified a cohort of Year 10 secondary students who may benefit from a targeted education program. This program was planned to increase students' orientation and preparation to Year 11 and 12 and the world of work and is reported on in the following chapter.

Chapter 7

7.1 Brief Orientation to the Years 11 -12 Course

This chapter is focused on Research Question 4:

- Does a brief orientation to Years 11 and 12 course enhance Year 10 students' future depictions of their self-identity?

The participants in the brief education Years 11-12 orientation course were students from two of the three participating schools. In the previous chapter, the analysis of the teachers' interview data highlighted that the teachers asserted many of their students lacked belief in their future capacity for learning success and did not have enough knowledge of the education system beyond Year10 to make informed, future orientated, education participation decisions. The brief orientation to Years 11 and 12 course was developed and negotiated with the schools after considering the findings from the teacher interviews. It also enabled a further investigation of the identitygram procedure with a second cohort of students. The primary intention of the orientation to Years 11 and 12 course was to offer to the students new knowledge about different education options and therefore perhaps a different perspective on their opportunities for learning participation in Years 11 and 12.

7.2 Background to Orientation Course

Students who previously left school after Year 10 to find low-skilled jobs or seek an apprenticeship will now be required to attend school for two additional years. Many students will find that the low-skilled jobs or apprenticeships they are seeking after Year 10 either no longer exist or are very competitive and require a higher standard of literacy and numeracy than anticipated. Schools and government acknowledge that changes are needed within schools and school programs to meet the needs of all the students who now attend Years 11

and 12 in Australian schools. Schools and policy makers also acknowledge that such a change creates tension between the traditional focus of senior secondary schools on students' achievement of university entrance scores and new understandings about the role of senior secondary schools in preparing young people to embark on a range of pathways after Year 12. The proportion of low-skilled jobs that suit under 18-year old individuals without Year 12 attainment is falling (Skills Australia, 2011). Many employers are now looking for mature young people who can navigate and meet the changing responsibilities of the workplace. Workplaces require young people to manage information, use technology, interact effectively with others, solve problems, make decisions and demonstrate safe work practice skills. Senior secondary schools need to be flexible and adapt to these demands. Provision of study options that include attainment of vocational based training (Education Services Australia, 2014) are now a strategic priority for senior secondary schools.

In Tasmania, even before the legislative changes have taken place, the requirement to 'go to school' for senior secondary students has tightened. This has occurred through public debate and government led initiatives. Just having students 'attend' school to meet legislated obligations without strategic facilitation of active education participation has little apparent benefit to young people. Rather, schooling needs to transition students into meaningful opportunities (Wilkinson & Marmot, 2003). The teachers interviewed expressed their understanding that it remains critically important that those students who intend to go to university continue to have access to a broad range of high-quality pre-tertiary subjects. The teachers asserted that with human capital growth in mind as the primary strategic intention asked by government of senior secondary schools, the needs of those students on a clear pathway to university should not take precedence over the education attainment of other students. Attainable course and subject offerings in senior secondary Years 11 and 12 now need to consider more closely the needs of that 6o per cent of students who choose not to go

on to university immediately after completing Year 12. These students have viable attainment alternatives offered through a broad range of vocationally oriented subjects and courses.

7.3 Selection of Students

The researcher hypothesised that the sample of disadvantaged and ambivalent students lacked information about vocationally oriented pedagogy and pathway choices in Years 11 and 12 and lacked understanding of their own strengths and capacities and how to apply them to gain access to a vocational AQF Level II course in Years 11 and 12. The teachers interviewed indicated that the students coming from their schools, located in areas of disadvantage, often missed being granted a place in a vocational (VET) course in college (Years 11 and 12). The teachers said this was because of communication problems that led to them failing the requirements of the intake interview process. In addition the students, lacked self-confidence, or simply did not understand how Years 11 and 12 would help to transition them into further study and then the world or work.

In this chapter, the pre and post identitygrams and the students' written and verbal feedback on the Year 11s and 12 orientation course is analysed and discussed as an indicator of whether the course influenced the students' thinking and self-perceptions and if so, in what ways. The researcher selected as the orientation course the community sector Certificate Level I course. This course has a strong focus on oral communication and encourages students to reflect on their out-of-school community and who lives in their community from a diversity perspective. It is also an AQF-endorsed vocational foundation program that leads to and facilitates access to a broad range of Certificate II vocational (VET) participation pathway options. This aspect was considered relevant so the students also gained something meaningful from their participation as well as an opportunity to

improve their self-belief in their future capacity to participate in education. The course also had the effect of orientating the Year 10 students from the more generalist studies provided in Years 7 to 10 to the more specialist studies of Years 11 and 12. Students living in and attending schools located in communities experiencing disadvantage can find making the move from generalist to more specialist study more difficult (Abbott-Chapman, 2011). Thus the purpose of the AQF Certificate I in Community Service Work was to engage the Year 10 students' interest in an educational pathway, to better prepare them for Year 11 adult and applied learning culture and pedagogies and to assist their transition from a more generalist study program in Year 10 to a more specialised study program in Years 11 and 12.

The orientation course was both strategically timed, and strategically taught by the researcher. The course was over five days, offered in the final weeks of Year 10. Ten young people chose to participate in the course. One of the 10 students wanted to take part in the course, but withdrew from the research, so did not participate in data collection activities. The hands-on learning provided to the students in the orientation program was activity based and student-centred. Competencies such as oral communication, working cooperatively, decision making, occupational health and safety were included in the course, along with the underpinning knowledge of critical thinking and consideration of broader social and society issues such as law and ethics, inclusion and diversity.

7.4 Survey Feedback

Of the nine course participants who took part in the course, seven remained at the end of the final day of the course to evaluate the training they had received. One of the two students who did not stay to give feedback was being picked up to care for their younger sibling, so their mother could go to work, and the other student left to go home because they had

something important to do there. Both these students thanked the researcher as they left and said they had had a positive experience.

The survey interview questions used on the feedback survey sheet (Appendix I) were chosen by the teacher/researcher from a predetermined 'bank' of twenty evaluative questions provided to the researcher. These questions were part of the quality assurance framework required by and provided to the researcher by the Recognised Training Organisation (RTO) authorised to provide the training, Polytechnic Tasmania. The feedback sheet asked the students if they agreed or disagreed with statements about the course to indicate what benefit they thought the course provided and what they valued about the course. They were also able to make additional comments.

Participating Students' responses to statement questions

The first three statements on the evaluation sheet asked the students to rate their level of agreement on whether the learning outcomes for the training were attained as follows: 5 – 'strongly agree', 4 – 'agree', 3 – 'neither agree nor disagree', 2 – 'disagree and 1 – 'disagree strongly'. The first three statements put to the students related to the actual competency units of (1) communication, (2) community services work, and (3) occupational health and safety.

Statement 1: "The unit - BSBCMM101A Apply Basic Communication Skills has provided me with useful skills and knowledge for communicating in the workplace." Five participants selected a level 4 'agree' response and two participants gave this a level 5 'strongly agree'.

Statement 2: "The unit - CHCCS211B Prepare for Work in the Community Sector has provided me with useful skills and knowledge about working in the community sector." One participant gave this unit a level 3 response ' neither agree nor disagree' with the statement.

Three participants gave this statement a level 4 ‘agree’. Three participants gave this a level 5 ‘strongly agree’.

Statement 3: “The unit HLTWHS200A Participate in OHS Processes has provided me with useful knowledge for workplace safety and health”. Two participants gave this a level 4 ‘agree’ and five participants gave this a level 5 ‘strongly agree’.

Twenty of the 21 responses the students gave about the actual units (subjects) of competency were positive. Ten of the twenty-one responses were strongly positive, giving a ‘strongly agree’ response about the usefulness of the units. Only one was neither positive nor negative and none of the students indicated that any one of the three vocational units of competency was not useful to them. The students’ strongly positive responses to the three statements about the unit’s usefulness as a foundation program indicates that they believed their participation in the intervention would influence and facilitate their access to work and vocational participation pathway options in Years 11 and 12.

Explaining to the students about how Australian vocational education pathways were made more accessible through progressive development of broad knowledge and skills, at lower levels in broad vocational streams, to then narrow with specialist work role functions, was considered by this research as ‘critical learning’ for this group of students (Freire, 1986). Without this information, which could be conveyed in relatively short class-time, many students are left disempowered in making education participation decisions. The purpose of the intervention in providing ‘critical,’ transparent information about the AQF was to shift the students’ thinking on what participation in education offered them in the future. The shift in thinking was needed to enable the connection between future education participation and future work and to invite discussion on how the experience of education might be different in Years 11 and 12 if the students participated in a vocational course of study with other Years 11 and 12 subjects.

Statement 4: “Overall the training was useful.” Two participants gave this a level 4 ‘agree’ and five participants gave this a level 5 ‘strongly agree’ response. The students all found the training useful and most (five students) found it very useful.

Statement 5: “I can use the information to assist me in my decisions about future education work and training.” The intention of the brief orientation course was to change participants’ negative beliefs about ongoing participation in education. Statement 5 asked the students whether they agreed the information in the course assisted them in decisions about future education, work and training. One participant gave this a level 3 ‘neither agree nor disagree’ response, three participants gave this a level 4 ‘agree’ and three participants gave this a level 5 ‘strongly agree’. A positive change to the students’ ambivalent attitude to future education participation was indicated by their answers. Six of the seven students agreed or strongly agreed that the intervention course had provided them with information that had a positive influence by assisting in their decision making as they transitioned from Year 10 to Year 11.

Statement 6: “Teacher involved participants in learning activities.” In keeping with the intention of the brief intervention course, the involvement of the students in the learning was of key importance. This represents the active, participatory aspect of the research. The teacher’s responsibility was to conduct the learning in a way that continually asked the students to contribute through reflection, and to ask how what they learned applied in their lived experience and to real life situations. Shifting education participation from a passive to an active process of involvement was of strategic importance to the intervention intention of re-engaging the students in education and in learning. Three participants gave this statement a level 4 ‘agree’ response and five participants gave this a level 5 ‘strongly agree’.

Statement 7: What part did you like the most and was the most valuable thing you learnt and why”? The students all made comments. The researcher saw this as significant

because these students were not normally very verbally communicative. Given that these students were identified as being ambivalent about education participation prior to their participation in the course this was an unexpected result that indicated positive engagement. By answering, they chose to provide feedback, an additional effort requiring thought beyond what was required about their learning experience. The students commented:

"I learnt about all the safety rules and OHS and how to communicate in the work place!"

"There was a lot of writing which made me learn more when I was writing stuff down."

"The most valuable thing I learnt was how broad the community is."

"I really liked interviewing Miss X on OHS."

"Watching the video of the workplace stuff."

"The OHS because I want to be a builder and it will be useful."

"The most valuable thing I learnt in the course was about OHS work because you need to apply OHS wherever you work."

Four of the students rated the occupational health and safety content as the most practical and useful to them. One spoke about watching a video on the workplace and one liked the requirement to write things down in the course. One student found finding out about their community the most valuable aspect of what they learnt. The greatest value of the course to the students was the practical learning related to the workplace through workplace health and safety.

Statement 8: "What didn't you like, and was of least value to you and why?" Four students answered this question. Very few expressed things they did not like about the course. For example, one student disliked the reading and one student did not like the movie

(about inclusion and diversity). The responses were predominantly positive. One student said they liked everything and one simply stated, *"It was valuable"*. Under 'additional comments' one student simply said, "*I thought it was really useful*" and added a hand drawn smiley face and an exclamation mark! As will become evident in a later section, this sort of simple statement, expressed to the teacher both in and out of class, indicated the potential for the course information and values to 'reach' culturally impoverished students and prepare them for education and life change.

Further qualitative evidence of the long-term impact on students' thinking and aspirations of participation in the course was provided by the following researcher's anecdote.

The year after I had conducted the research brief intervention course with the Year 10 students I went to teach at a Year K to 12 school co-located with a federally funded Trade Training Centre (TTC). Upon my arrival at the school early on my first day of teaching, I parked in the car park and walked across an empty yard towards the senior secondary school building.

The only person around was a tall, darkly dressed young man sitting at a timber outdoor setting in the yard. He was leaning over his phone with a hood up over his head and face. As I approached, I realised, quite unexpectedly that the young man was one of the students who had taken part in the brief course I had conducted as part of this research, at a different school, the previous year.

Realising I knew the young person I walked over and stopped near to him, saying "Hi Jay (not his real name, in the research this student's code is ASEY), it's good to see you, how are you going?" ASEY looked up from his phone, and seemed as surprised to see me as me him, but in a good way, and he remembered my name saying, "Hi Deb, what are you doing

here?" I replied, explaining I was going to be teaching the senior secondary students. I knew that ASEY was not in my class, so I was curious to know what he was doing there, so I asked. ASEY explained, "I am doing my Certificate II in plumbing and draining over at the Trade Training Centre, and after that I'll get an apprenticeship, in plumbing I reckon". Hearing this I expressed my delight saying, "Gosh Jay that's fantastic, well done". Jay smiled slightly at me before putting his head back down under his hoodie to look at his phone. This appeared to indicate that our conversation was over, however, I was curious to know if ASEY had reflected on his participation in the course, now four months previous. As I was about to leave to go into the school building, I asked, in a light, offhand way, hoping to invite an honest reply. "Hey Jay, you know that course we did last year, I am just wondering what you thought of it, it was a bit silly, really, wasn't it?" Jay immediately sat up straight and looked at me in a serious and direct way. He spoke clearly and slowly, in a way that suggested he felt he needed to correct my lack of understanding, and said, "It was the best thing I have ever done Deb and was the reason I got into the Cert II course".

7.5 Identitygrams and Brief Orientation Course

Before comparing the identitygrams of course participants and non-participants in the course, it is useful to reflect first on the findings presented in Chapter 5. The evidence was that students in the higher SES (higher ICSEA scores) schools had more icons related to educational aspirations than students in the more economically disadvantaged schools (lower ICSEA scores).

The identitygram shown in Figure 7.1 was completed by a female student who attended the higher SES non-government school. The identitygram showed considerable depth and complexity of identity characteristics. There was in this identitygram a personal interest 'richness' that, from an education perspective, indicated both incentives to learn and the

viability potential of future educational participation. With the depth and complexity of identity characteristics and the incentive and viability elements present within this student's construct of identity, it indicated to the researcher that the student had, within the captured identity construct at that time, the capacity and confidence to draw on dimensions and characteristics of their identity to participate and achieve educationally in life. There are also indications that this student knew, understood and valued education achievement and had included this in her creative and symbolic 2nd occasion representation of how she saw her future.

Figure 7.1. Year 10 female student from the non-government school – 2nd occasion future.

The identitygram of the female student from the higher SES school (ISCEA 996) (Figure 7.1) contrasted with the identitygram (Figure 7.2) competed by a female Year 10 student attending a lower SES government school (ICSEA 883).

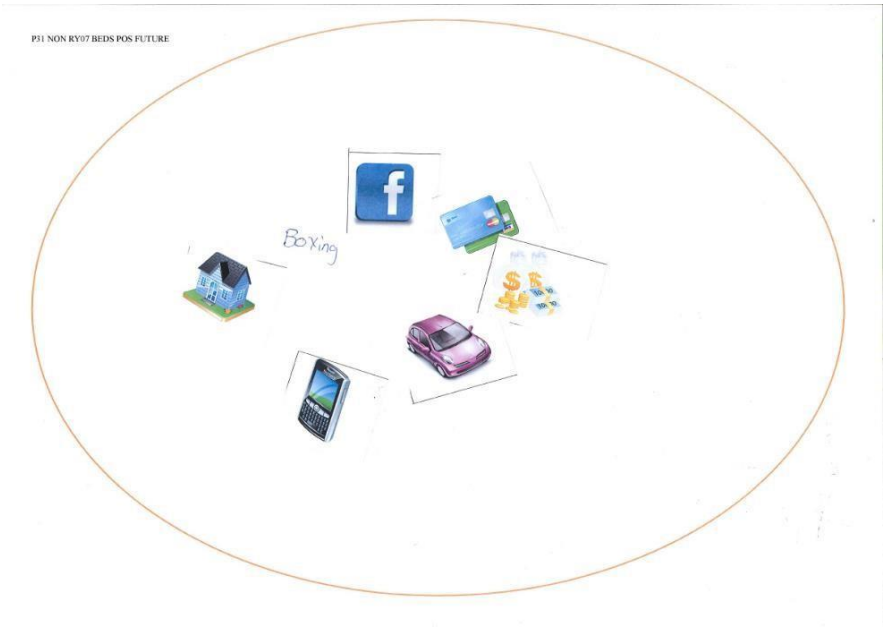


Figure 7.2. Year 10 female student from the government school – 2nd occasion future.

The identitygram of the student shown in Figure 7.2 above indicated a low complexity of identity characteristics and incentives financially oriented. Future education or work viability elements did not appear to be present within this student's construct of identity. There appeared to be few personal interests. From an education perspective, there were few, if any, indications of future identity viability in terms of a desire to participate in education or training in the future and few interests depicted that indicated an interest in activities that may have led or linked to future training or work. The construct of this student's identity indicated to the researcher that this student aspired to have money and access to credit facilities and access to modes of communicating with others via a phone and social media. The identitygram also indicated that the student wished in the future to have a home and a motor vehicle. Importantly, from an education participation perspective, there appeared little here to indicate how these depicted aspirations might be achieved through future participation in education, training or work.

The paucity of interests and education icons suggested that the student from the low SES school had little to draw upon to achieve the success through education and work that could

make these things more possible. The one interest icon selected, boxing, suggest non-academic related interests. Reflecting on this student's paucity of icons used to depict identity raised important questions for the research to consider, some of which were outside the scope of this research. For example, one key question might be: What does absence of depictions of education and or personal interests in the identitygrams of some students mean? Moreover, how does the apparent absence of icons provide an indication of compromised viability of future education participation?

This realisation that the icon selection required students self-reflect on their identity led to the introduction of the brief orientation to Years 11 and 12 course into the research design. The purpose of the brief course was to use the identitygram pre and post the course to test whether the students' identitygrams were stable over a short period of time. The orientation program had limitations in terms of duration. It also needs to be acknowledged that the students who chose to participate in the brief orientation to Years 11 and 12 course may have been more open to the ideas and the opportunity that their participation offered them.

The following sections, 7.6 and 7.7, examine how the student participants constructed their identitygrams with icons on the first occasion and compared these to how they made them on the second occasion. The two types of comparisons 'identity complexity construct' and 'education identity construct' enabled the researcher to analyse how the orientation course influenced the participants. To understand the relationship between the construct of an identity and how the apparent absence of icons indicates or compromises viability of future education participation the identitygram approach, the analysis considered the absence, as well as presence, of certain icons depicting identity.

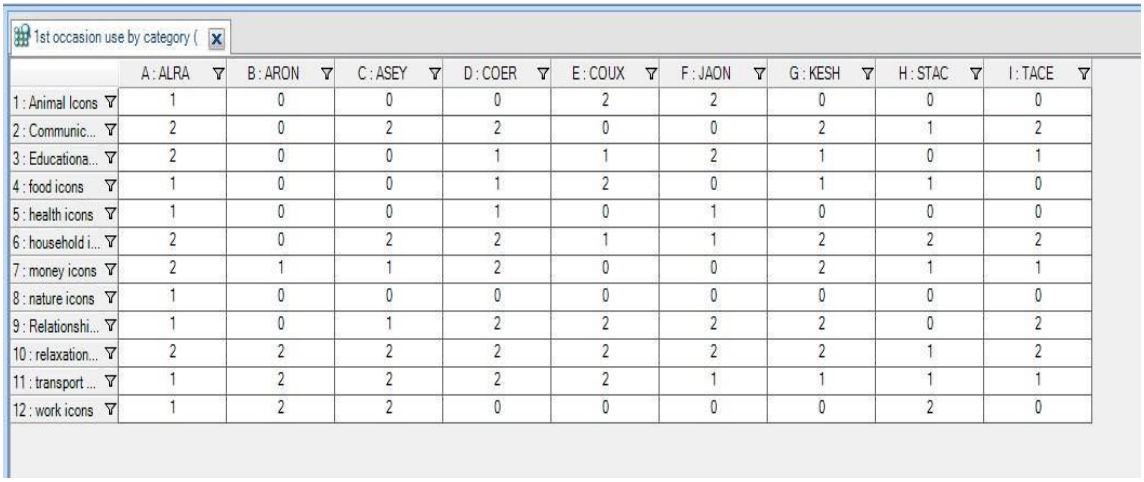
7.6 Changes in Identity Construct

In the review of literature, the researcher hypothesised that some dimensional complexity in identity construct positively would influence the associated concept 'identity viability'. Both appear to have an important role in sustaining participation in education. To investigate this concept, the researcher analysed participants' depictions of identity through their choices of a range of icons within different categories that visually represented their identity. The range indicates that person's self-awareness of their interests and potential strengths and capabilities. For young people transitioning into senior secondary education from more general learning to more specialised learning, these strengths and capacities act as an identity foundation for engaging in a range of learning and education experiences that then build on and strengthen capabilities. Strengths and capabilities are the personal resources that make up 'identity capital'. The icons chosen by the student to visually depict their identities gave the researcher insight into what the Year 10 student participants had within their store of self-understandings on which to draw to assist them in their progression from Year 10 to Years 11 and 12, vocational study, other training, or employment.

Looking at the identitygrams through the lens of strengths and capacities (NOW and in the FUTURE), and conceptualising aspects of identity as assets or 'attribute strengths' enabled the researcher to assess the viability of the participant's identity through the lens of personal potential and future education participation. This approach was consistent with the education identity research as discussed in the literature review that links participation in education with identity viability. A reasonable level of complexity of identity indicates identity viability and is a positive indicator of optimisation of adolescent identity. Having a range of interests, strengths and capacities is therefore likely to strengthen education participation options and possibilities.

As illustrated in Appendix K, the identitygram approach categorised each icon in the identitygram kit according to a type or group of activities or interests, which that object may represent as an icon. Twelve icon categories were used: animals, relationships, communication, relaxation and recreation, education, food, money, transport and travel, work, nature, household and health. For NVivo coding of the icon categories, a parent node was created for each category. Each identitygram was then individually node coded by icon category. After coding was completed, the coding accuracy was checked by opening the source and the coding tabs next to each other in the NVivo program. The first analysis of the students' identitygram data compared the identity depictions between the two sub-groups of those who participated in the brief orientation course, and those who did not, using the range of icons across the twelve icon categories. An increase in the number of categories used by each participant group in the depiction of their identity indicated increased complexity in the self-dimensions of those students' identities (Hattie, 2014).

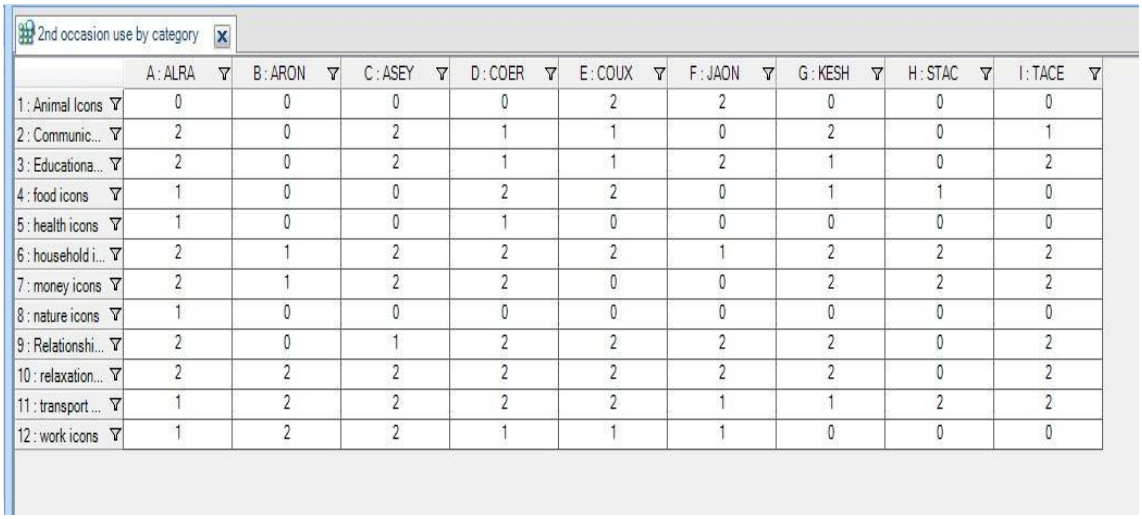
The four screen shots below provide examples of the 'NOW' dimensional data. The 'FUTURE' identitygrams for each student group—those who took part in the course and those who did not—were analysed in the same way but are not exampled. Figure 7.3, below, shows the dimensional data transferred from the students NOW identities. The maximum number of dimensional categorised depictions possible for each student was twelve categories in each identitygram. The students created two identitygrams on each occasion, giving a maximum 24 possible category depictions a student could have used in the construct of identity on each occasion. The first two screenshots following show the identity dimensions of those students who took part in the intervention course, providing examples of the number of icons used in each category by each course student on the first occasion they made their identity 'NOW' identitygrams.



1st occasion use by category (

	A : ALRA	B : ARON	C : ASEY	D : COER	E : COUX	F : JAON	G : KESH	H : STAC	I : TACE
1 : Animal Icons	1	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
2 : Communic...	2	0	2	2	0	0	2	1	2
3 : Educationa...	2	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	1
4 : food icons	1	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0
5 : health icons	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
6 : household i...	2	0	2	2	1	1	2	2	2
7 : money icons	2	1	1	2	0	0	2	1	1
8 : nature icons	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 : Relationshi...	1	0	1	2	2	2	2	0	2
10 : relaxation...	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
11 : transport ...	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1
12 : work icons	1	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	0

Figure 7.3. Use of categories of icons 1st occasion NOW -Students who took part in the course.



2nd occasion use by category

	A : ALRA	B : ARON	C : ASEY	D : COER	E : COUX	F : JAON	G : KESH	H : STAC	I : TACE
1 : Animal Icons	0	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0
2 : Communic...	2	0	2	1	1	0	2	0	1
3 : Educationa...	2	0	2	1	1	2	1	0	2
4 : food icons	1	0	0	2	2	0	1	1	0
5 : health icons	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
6 : household i...	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2
7 : money icons	2	1	2	2	0	0	2	2	2
8 : nature icons	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
9 : Relationshi...	2	0	1	2	2	2	2	0	2
10 : relaxation...	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	2
11 : transport ...	1	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2
12 : work icons	1	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	0

Figure 7.4. Use of categories of icons 2nd occasion NOW Students who took part in the course.

The next two screenshots, following (Figures 7.5 and 7.6) show the identity dimensions of those students who did not take part in the course. The screen shots provide examples of the number of icons used in each category by each student on the first occasion they made their identity 'NOW' identitygrams.

1st occasion use by category n

	A : BEDS	B : EDON	C : KAER	D : RYCK	E : TAER
1 : Animal Icons	0	0	0	1	2
2 : Communic...	2	2	2	2	2
3 : Educationa...	1	2	1	0	1
4 : food icons	1	2	3	2	2
5 : health icons	0	0	0	0	0
6 : household i...	1	1	1	1	1
7 : money icons	1	2	0	0	2
8 : nature icons	0	0	0	0	0
9 : Relationshi...	0	0	1	2	2
10 : relaxation...	2	2	3	2	2
11 : transport ...	1	1	1	2	2
12 : work icons	1	1	2	2	0

Figure 7.5. Use of categories of icons 1st occasion NOW by students who did not take part in the course.

2nd occasion use by category

	A : BEDS	B : EDON	C : KAER	D : RYCK	E : TAER
1 : Animal Icons	0	0	0	0	2
2 : Communic...	2	2	0	2	2
3 : Educationa...	0	2	1	0	1
4 : food icons	1	2	1	0	2
5 : health icons	0	0	0	0	0
6 : household i...	1	1	0	1	2
7 : money icons	2	1	0	0	2
8 : nature icons	0	1	0	0	0
9 : Relationshi...	0	0	0	2	2
10 : relaxation...	1	2	1	2	2
11 : transport ...	2	2	1	2	2
12 : work icons	0	1	0	2	0

Figure 7.6. Use of categories of icons 2nd occasion NOW by students who did not take part in the course.

The sum of the dimensionally categorised data by NOW and FUTURE identitygrams for each participant by pre (1st occasion) and post (2nd occasion) of the course, is outlined in Figure 7.1.

Table 7.1

Comparison of Sum of Categories Icons by Time 1 and 2 by Participation in Course

Students from the low SES school	Student Code	1st Occasion Sum of the number of Icon categories of NOW and FUTURE identitygrams	2nd Occasion Sum of the number of Icon categories of NOW and FUTURE identitygrams
Non-participate in the brief orientation course	BEDS	10	9
	EDON	13	14
	KAER	14	4
	RYCK	14	11
	TAER	16	17
Participation in the brief orientation course	ALRA	17	17
	ARON	7	8
	ASEY	12	15
	COER	15	16
	COUX	12	15
	JAON	11	11
	KESH	13	13
	STAC	9	7
	TACE	11	13

The identitygram changes that occurred with the students between the first and second data collection occasion is illustrated Table 7.2. This table outlines those students who experienced no change in the complexion of their identity, those who decreased their complexion, and those who increased their complexion. A key issue noted was that participating in the orientation course was more associated with an increase in icon

categories selection, and non-participation was more associated with a decrease in icon categories selection.

Table 7.2

Complexion of Identity Change by Course participation

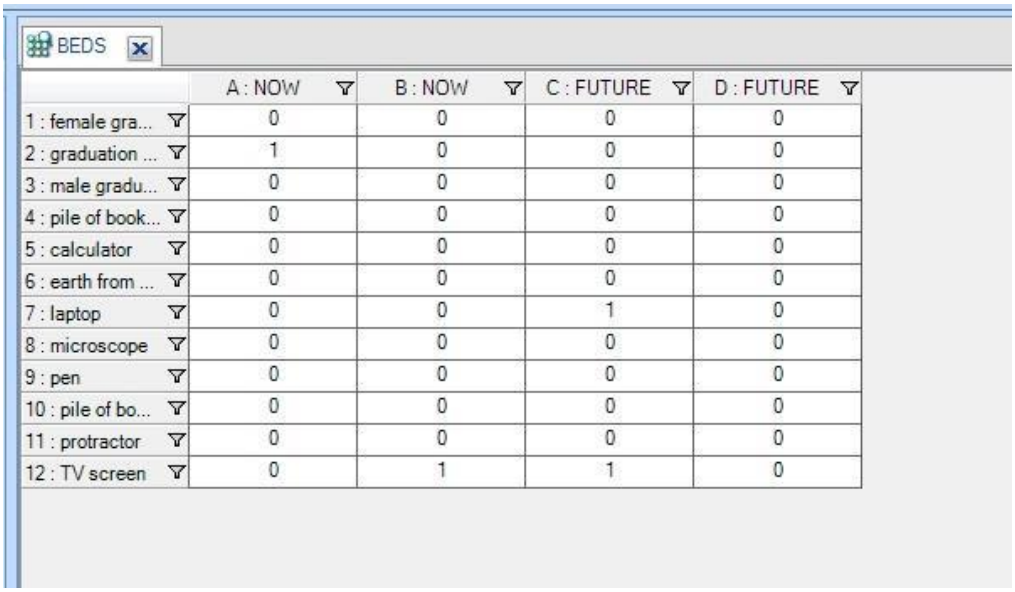
Time 1 and time 2 comparison	Participation in the orientation program	Non participation in the program
Same icon categories both occasions	ALRA;JAON;KESH	
Decreased icons categories 2nd occasion	STAC	BEDS; KAER; RYCK
Increased icons categories 2nd occasion	ARON; ASEY; COER; COUX;TACE	TAER; EDON

As outlined above, five of the nine participants increased the icons that depicted their identities across the 12 categories. Three of the participants stayed the same and one participant decreased the number of categories of icons they used in constructing their identity after participating in the program. Of the students who did not participate, for one student there was no change, for three students there was a decrease and for two there was an increase in the category range used. This finding of relative positive change to the complexion of the course participants' identities was a surprising outcome given the short time frame of the orientation to Years 11 and 12 course. This finding is examined further as case studies in section 7.9 of this chapter.

7.7 Comparison of Icons Selected by SES

As discussed in section 7.5, the absence of education icons in the students' identitygrams was considered as revealing as the presence of icons. Based on this perspective, the following analysis of the participants' use of education icons looked at the data from the perspective of 'no change' in depiction. 'No change' investigates the possibility of new education icons appearing after the students had participated in the orientation course. If an icon appeared in the identitygram on the 1st and the 2nd occasion or if an icon did not appear in either the 1st or the 2nd identitygram, this was no change. No change to the appearance or non-appearance of an education icon was evidence of no change occurring in the education self-identity of the participant.

Two example screen shots of use of education icons by students BEDS and EDON are provided in Figures 7.7 and 7.8. These screenshots show how the coding recorded education icon use and changes to that use of two of the five young people who did not take part in the intervention course. The matrix records show how each of the education process and outcome icons were used by these two non-participants. An '0' indicates the participant did not use the icon; '1' indicates the participant used the icon.

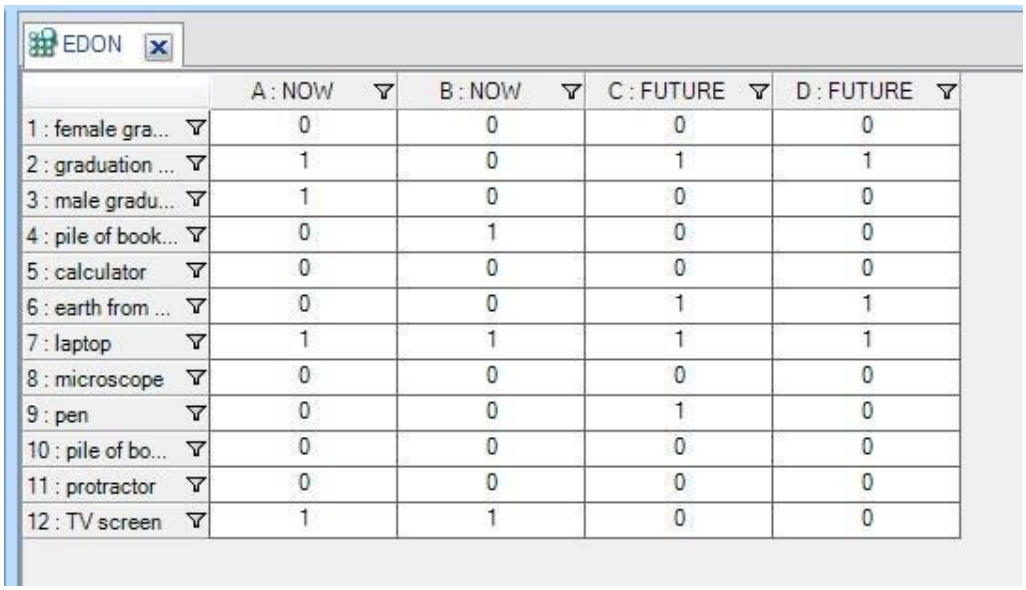


BEDS

	A : NOW	B : NOW	C : FUTURE	D : FUTURE
1 : female gra...	0	0	0	0
2 : graduation ...	1	0	0	0
3 : male gradu...	0	0	0	0
4 : pile of book...	0	0	0	0
5 : calculator	0	0	0	0
6 : earth from ...	0	0	0	0
7 : laptop	0	0	1	0
8 : microscope	0	0	0	0
9 : pen	0	0	0	0
10 : pile of bo...	0	0	0	0
11 : protractor	0	0	0	0
12 : TV screen	0	1	1	0

Figure 7.7. BEDS use of education icons in four identitygrams on the two occasions.

On 20 occasions no change occurred for participant BEDS. On 1 occasion a new representation of education was depicted on the 2nd occasion. In two FUTURE depictions two icon representations were lost on the second occasion. In one NOW depiction an icon was lost.



EDON

	A : NOW	B : NOW	C : FUTURE	D : FUTURE
1 : female gra...	0	0	0	0
2 : graduation ...	1	0	1	1
3 : male gradu...	1	0	0	0
4 : pile of book...	0	1	0	0
5 : calculator	0	0	0	0
6 : earth from ...	0	0	1	1
7 : laptop	1	1	1	1
8 : microscope	0	0	0	0
9 : pen	0	0	1	0
10 : pile of bo...	0	0	0	0
11 : protractor	0	0	0	0
12 : TV screen	1	1	0	0

Figure 7.8. EDON's use of education icons in four identitygrams on the two occasions.

On 20 occasions no change occurred for participant EDON. On 1 occasion, a new representation of education was depicted on the 2nd occasion, NOW. For this group of five non-participants' seven identitygram changes of use occurred. Two of the changes in the icon depictions were positive and 5 were negative. 'Negative depictions' is used to describe when the education icons that were present are lost between the 1st and 2nd occasions. On five occasions, icons appeared in the non-participant group were used on the first occasion and disappeared on the second occasion.

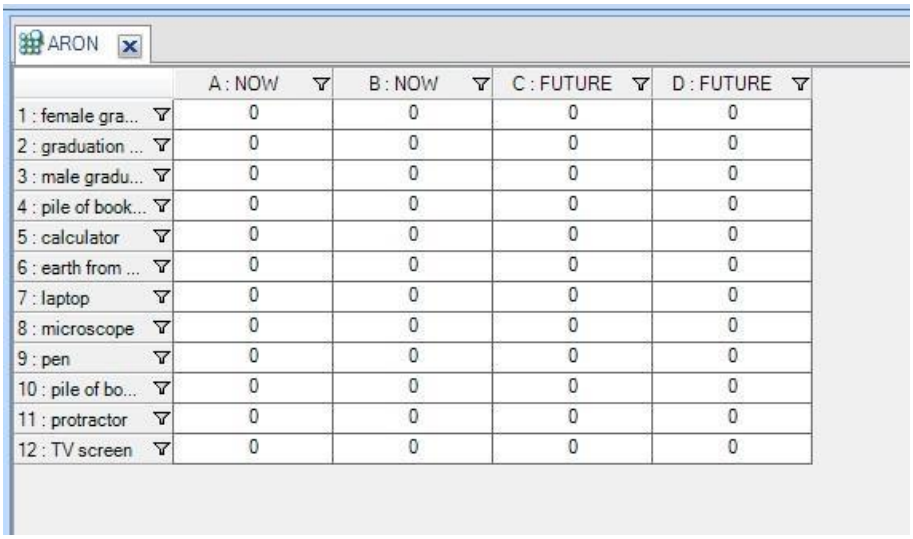
The second part of this analysis investigated the group of Year 10 students who took part in the orientation to Years 11 and 12 course to review the stability of the students' self-identity as measured using the icons and if some icon depictions changed after the course. Self-identity is considered a stable variable formed over a long period of time and not influence by short-term activities and events (Kirk & Miller, 1986; Marsh & O'Mara, 2009). The following screen shots provide examples of a typical participant's NVivo queries re how education icons were used. A '0' indicates the participant did not use the icon; '1' indicates the participant used the icon. Below each example screenshot, any changes to the way the student used the icons are discussed.

ALRA

	A : NOW	B : NOW	C : FUTURE	D : FUTURE
1 : female gra...	1	1	0	0
2 : graduation ...	0	0	0	0
3 : male gradu...	0	0	0	0
4 : pile of book...	0	1	0	0
5 : calculator	0	0	0	0
6 : earth from ...	0	0	1	1
7 : laptop	1	1	0	0
8 : microscope	0	0	0	0
9 : pen	0	0	0	0
10 : pile of bo...	0	0	0	0
11 : protractor	0	0	0	0
12 : TV screen	1	1	0	1

Figure 7.9. ALRA's use of education icons in four identitygrams on the two occasions.

On the 22 occasions when icons change could occur, no change occurred for participant ALRA. On 2 occasions new icon representations of education were depicted. On the 2nd occasion, 1 NOW and 1 FUTURE education icons appeared that were not there previously.



ARON

	A : NOW	B : NOW	C : FUTURE	D : FUTURE
1 : female gra...	0	0	0	0
2 : graduation ...	0	0	0	0
3 : male gradu...	0	0	0	0
4 : pile of book...	0	0	0	0
5 : calculator	0	0	0	0
6 : earth from ...	0	0	0	0
7 : laptop	0	0	0	0
8 : microscope	0	0	0	0
9 : pen	0	0	0	0
10 : pile of bo...	0	0	0	0
11 : protractor	0	0	0	0
12 : TV screen	0	0	0	0

Figure 7.10. ARON's use of education icons in four identitygrams on the two occasions.

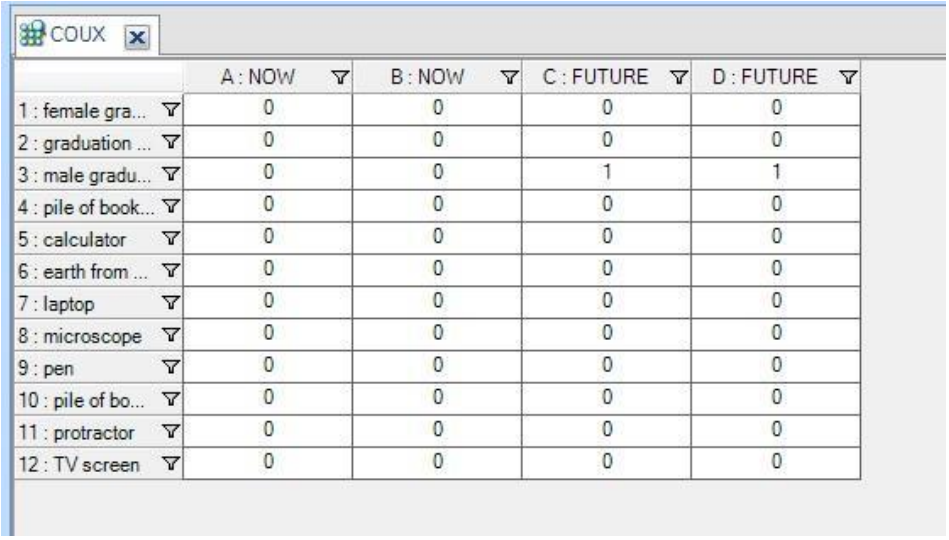
On 24 occasions no change occurred for participant ARON. No new icon depictions of education were made. On 48 possible occasions when this student could have depicted education icons, there were no representations of education process or outcomes made. This student did not see any of the icons representing education as aspects of his identity either before or after participating in the course.

COER

	A : NOW	B : NOW	C : FUTURE	D : FUTURE
1 : female gra...	0	0	0	0
2 : graduation ...	0	0	0	0
3 : male gradu...	1	1	0	0
4 : pile of book...	0	0	0	0
5 : calculator	0	0	0	0
6 : earth from ...	0	0	0	0
7 : laptop	0	0	0	0
8 : microscope	0	0	0	0
9 : pen	0	0	0	0
10 : pile of bo...	0	0	0	0
11 : protractor	0	0	0	0
12 : TV screen	0	0	0	0

Figure 7.11. COER use of education icons in four identitygrams on the two occasions.

On 24 occasions, no change occurred for participant COER. No new icon representations of education were depicted on the 2nd occasion.



COUX

	A : NOW	B : NOW	C : FUTURE	D : FUTURE
1 : female gra...	0	0	0	0
2 : graduation ...	0	0	0	0
3 : male gradu...	0	0	1	1
4 : pile of book...	0	0	0	0
5 : calculator	0	0	0	0
6 : earth from ...	0	0	0	0
7 : laptop	0	0	0	0
8 : microscope	0	0	0	0
9 : pen	0	0	0	0
10 : pile of bo...	0	0	0	0
11 : protractor	0	0	0	0
12 : TV screen	0	0	0	0

Figure 7.12. COUX use of education icons in four identitygrams on the two occasions.

On 24 occasions, no icon change occurred for participant COUX. No new representations of education icons were depicted on the 2nd occasion

The trend in the data was that some changes did occur in the students' icon selection after the orientation intervention. In particular, new icons appeared in the 2nd occasion, which suggested more thinking related to post school options. This change suggested that for these seven students some level of identity enrichment was occurring. Four of the nine participants included education icons in their 2nd occasion identitygrams that previously did not appear in their 1st occasion identitygrams. Five of the nine course participants did not use any new education icon representations in their 2nd occasion identitygrams. For these students this may indicate that no educational dimension of identity enrichment occurred between the first and second occasion.

For the students in the orientation to Years 11 and 12 course there were nine icon changes in the education category. Two were icons that did not appear in the 2nd occasion, and seven were new educational icons. This finding indicates that the small amount of education icon depiction change that did occur for this group in the time between the 1st and 2nd data collection occasion was overall a positive change when compared to that of the

non-participant group. This suggests that these positive changes were linked to participation in the brief orientation course. The course group used more education icon depictions on the second occasion compared to the non-participant group, whose changes to depictions were collectively neither more negatively or positively change oriented but relatively stable, as were the identitygrams of the student participants from the non-government school who were not offered the brief orientation course. The post data suggests that the use of education icons increased for the students who participated more than the non-participants group.

As discussed previously, the absence of education icons by the students attending schools located in disadvantaged communities indicates a lack of education identity markers. Compared to the students in the pilot study, the students in the second cohort study from lower SES used fewer education icons in their identitygrams. This was the case both on the 1st and 2nd occasions, indicating that education identity for this group compared to the pilot school group differed. The pilot students were from a non-government school setting and while not considered a wealthy school, its SES status was higher than the government school students used in the main study. This comparison suggests that the general baseline of education identity was lower for the main study student group. In particular, what might be considered an 'average' number of education icons selected for the students from schools located in areas of economic advantage was considered high for the students in the more economic disadvantage communities. Given the low baseline of education identity of the students in the more economically disadvantaged schools, any incremental change recognises that disadvantage settings can be ameliorated if resources are provided. The implications for raising individual student's aspirations are broad, as examples of individual identitygram changes will show in the next section.

7.8 Case Studies Students – RYCK and ASEY

The following two case studies are provided to further illustrate how the identitygrams can facilitate an understanding of adolescents' perception of their self-identity. RYCK is a male Year 10 student who did not take part in the orientation program and attended a school in a low SES community. RYCK's identitygram showed he was interested in soccer, a trade in the future, perhaps a home, a car and a relationship. He depicted that communication was important to him by using the phone and the laptop. He also perhaps liked to listen to music, depicted by the stereo. There were no icons in RYCK's identitygrams that suggested he had further education participation intentions after Year 10. There is a toolbox that suggested RYCK's interest in working manually, but on its own did not show that he wanted to, or saw the need to, gain a trade qualification in the future.

Figure 7.13. 1st occasion NOW RYCK.

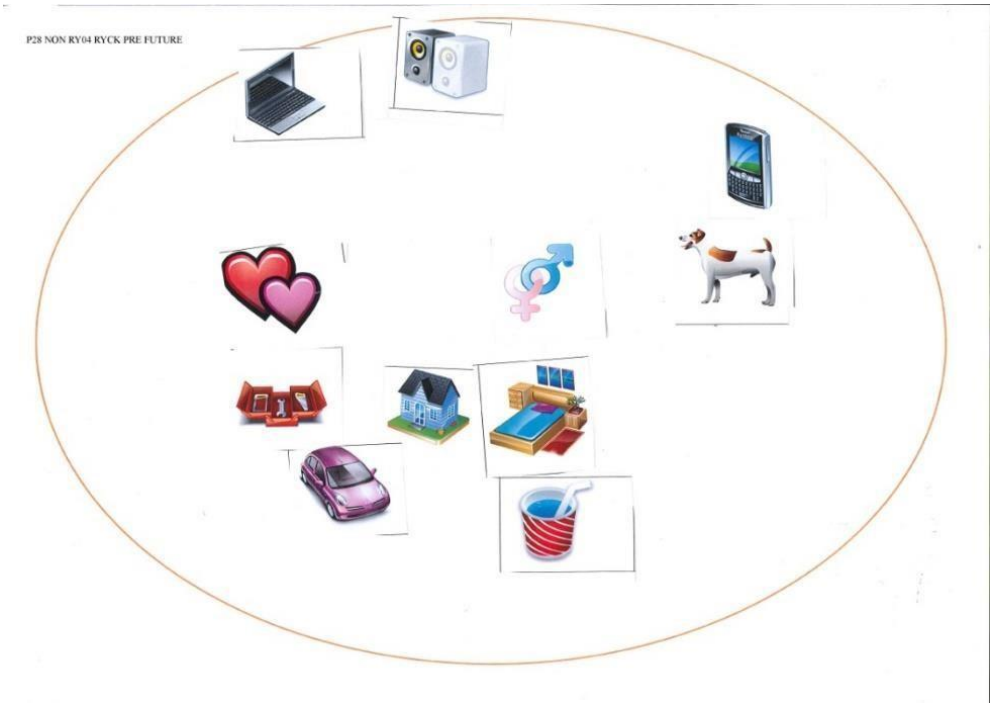


Figure 7.14. 1st occasion FUTURE RYCK.

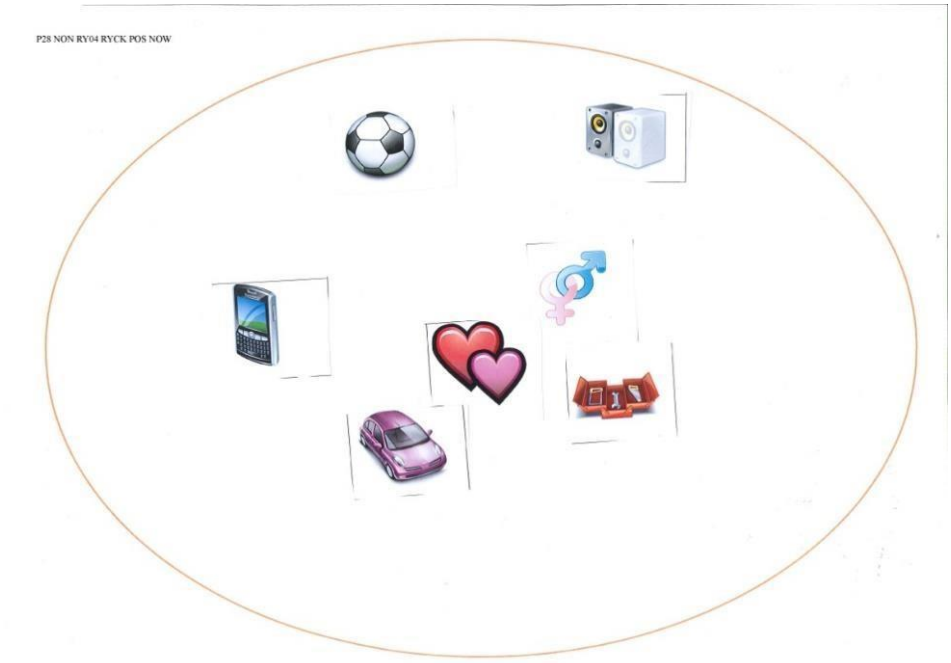


Figure 7.15. 2nd occasion NOW RYCK.

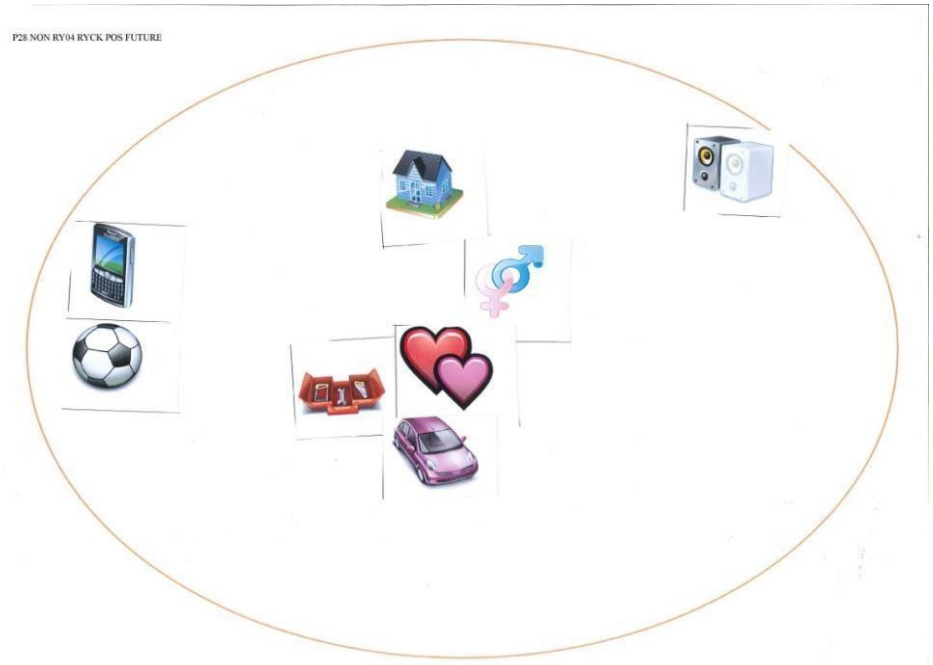


Figure 7.16. 2nd occasion FUTURE RYCK.

The following identitygrams were made by ASEY to depict his identity. The first two identitygrams were made on the first occasion, before he participated in the orientation to Years 11 and 12 program. Note the presence of the toolbox; however, no education or training related icons appear within the depictions.

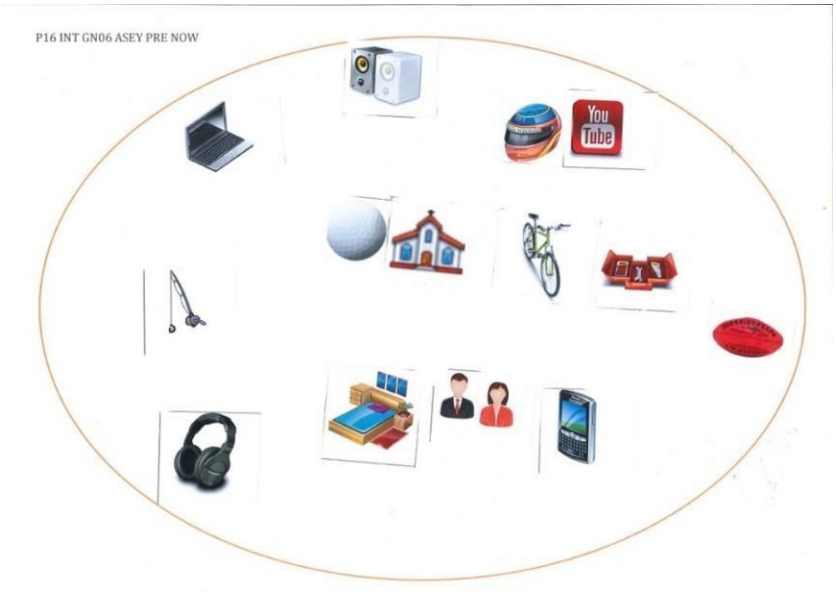


Figure 7.17. 1st occasion NOW ASEY.

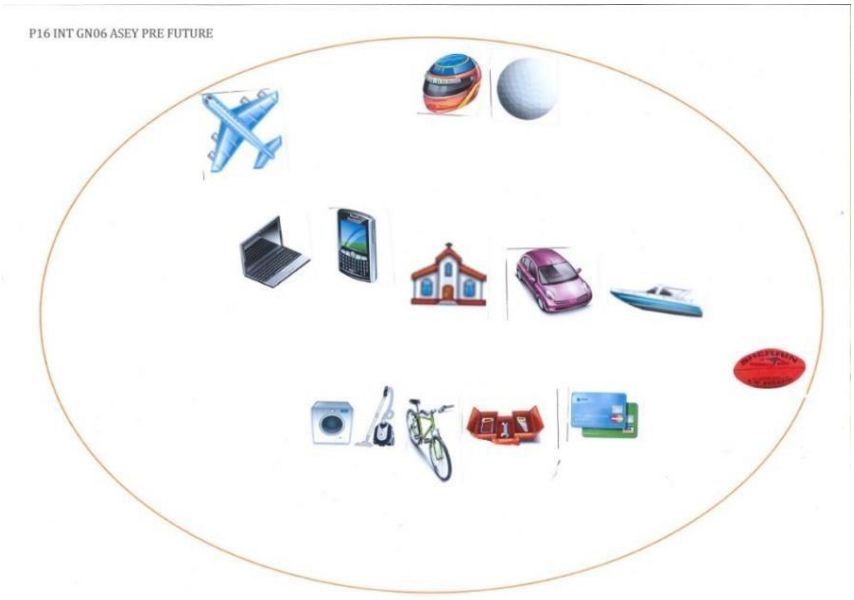


Figure 7.18. 1st occasion FUTURE ASEY student.

The next two identitygrams were also made by the student ASEY after he participated in the orientation program. Note the toolbox was still there, but then a male with a graduation hat appeared in how he saw his identity NOW and a graduation certificate appeared in how he saw his identity projected three years into the future. These icons were evidence of change after the orientation to Year 11 and 12 course.

Figure 7.19. 2nd occasion NOW ASEY.

Figure 7.20. 2nd occasion FUTURE ASEY.

ASEY is a male who took part in the course and attended a lower SES high school. The coding matrix of the educational icons is provided in Figure 7.21 below.

ASEY

	A : NOW	B : NOW	C : FUTURE	D : FUTURE
1 : female gra...	0	0	0	0
2 : graduation ...	0	0	0	1
3 : male gradu...	0	1	0	0
4 : pile of book...	0	0	0	0
5 : calculator	0	0	0	0
6 : earth from ...	0	0	0	0
7 : laptop	1	1	1	1
8 : microscope	0	0	0	0
9 : pen	0	0	0	0
10 : pile of bo...	0	0	0	0
11 : protractor	0	0	0	0
12 : TV screen	0	0	0	0

Figure 7.21. ASEY use of education icons in four identitygrams on the two occasions.

For participant ASEY the new representations of education icons, depicted on the 2nd occasion, one additional icon in the NOW and one additional icon in the FUTURE, indicated in increase motivation in education. ASEY expressed in interview with the researcher how the orientation to Years 11 and 12 course changed what future participation opportunities had opened up to him. The change was not in what he planned to do with his life after school, because the toolbox was present in each of his four identitygrams. Rather, the change was in relation to how he was going to set about achieving this by steps he would take after Year 10 and a recognition that completing Year 12 with relevant subjects and to high standards made him more competitive for an apprenticeship. The knowledge provided in the course enabled him to progress his aspirations by understanding for how the 'educational' pathways operated. The course facilitated his understanding of requirements and so how access to the next AQF level. It also enabled him to understand why dropping out of school was not a 'short cut' to gaining a trade quantification and so his aspirations.

7.9 The Relevance of the Context

The brief orientation to Years 11and 12 course data revealed that positive change for the disadvantaged student participants began within the education system with a course that provided them information and critical learning tools. The education transition vulnerable students who took part in the brief orientation course benefitted from their participation and their participation potentially may have benefitted them and assisted them to navigate successfully through education systems towards better employment and life outcomes. The findings also indicated how the students from disadvantaged schools appeared to benefit from information about vocational education and a vocational course experience to help construct a more personally viable future learning pathway through to completion of secondary school. The additional information provided by the course about the vocational

education system helped participants to construct and understand better what opportunities were offered to them by education as a system. The pedagogical approach in the course was activity-based. This approach may have provided some participants with a more meaningful educational experience. It enabled the Year 10 students to connect with the different pathways into the world of work, and assisted them gain confidence in preparing for the transition to senior secondary school. The findings from the data collection after the brief course suggested that socio-ecological change for some disadvantaged students can occur even from a short period of exposure to educational knowledge and skills and an understanding of career pathways.

The findings suggest that the orientation program helped students reflect on pathways in education and improve their readiness for the transition into Years 11 and 12. It provided opportunities for the Year 10 students to develop their oral communication and their participation in activities that related to the community in which they lived. Targeting students' prior-to-decision-making about their future options helped the students to see the purpose of Years 11 and 12. Such strategies appear to be needed more in schools located in more disadvantaged communities.

Chapter 8

Discussion

The primary aim of this research was to explore and better understand adolescent students' personal construct of 'self-identity' and the sub-construct, 'education identity'. The research investigated how these constructs of self might influence students' education decision-making, particularly in the education transition period of adolescence when young people begin to undertake more specialised studies. The research also investigated how a small group of young people holding ambivalence about education participation and school transition might re-engage with education through a pre-vocational training experience. The student participants were all in the critically formative education development period of adolescence and in education transition between junior secondary school and senior secondary school. The researcher hoped that by developing a visual representation method of investigating personal identification with education and learning as an aspect of identity, the identitygram method might identify when young people's identification with education and learning is vulnerable.

8.1 Statement of Research Question Findings

RQ 1: Is the identitygram procedure a suitable method to investigate students' self-identity?

The research findings support the notion that the identitygram procedure using icons is a suitable method to investigate students' self-identity. The identitygram approach was piloted with participants of the same age and developmental stage as those students of primary concern to the study. There was confirmation of the conceptual 'accuracy' of their identitygrams noted in the students' post activity interviews.

The indications are that the visual method facilitated the students' ability to reflect on themselves and their aspirations. It also allowed each participant to represent and construct his or her own identity. This visual approach helped eliminate many of the communication difficulties and barriers often associated with self-reported survey data collection (Soto et al., 2008). The participants also reported in their interviews that they enjoyed the creative process and indicated to the researcher that they related to the icons in the identitygram kit. Although the use may be considered a novel method of self-expression, many young people regularly use visual icons or emojis as short hand ways of communicating with each other. The willingness of participants to engage with the identitygram method and to choose icons to express their self-identity suggests that this method has potential.

RQ 2: Does school disadvantage influence students' depictions of their self-identity, as shown in their identitygrams?

The identitygrams provided the researcher with qualitative data that gave insight into the individual identity of the participants. By comparing groups of students the study shed light on how different socio-economic, cultural and educational factors might influence identity development. The students who participated in the research attended three different schools. Two of the schools were government schools located in disadvantaged communities and one was a non-government school with a higher SES rating. Students who attended the higher SES non-government school used more icons to depict their identity across categories than their peers in the more disadvantaged communities. In terms of the data, higher SES school averaged 19.6 icons per identitygram, compared to an average of 5.9 icons per identitygram for students from disadvantaged communities. With reference to educational icons students from lower SES schools, compared to their higher SES school peers, also used fewer education icons when forming their identitygrams. This finding suggests that disadvantage does influence students' visual depiction of their self-identity.

RQ 3: What are the concerns of teachers for their students from disadvantaged communities transitioning into Year 11?

The teachers asserted that their students living in disadvantaged communities were resource-poor in terms of cultural and social experiences and the students' homes were less likely to be able to provide support to the students' schooling. This had the consequence of making the students less confident about their ability to cope in Years 11 and 12. This requires more efforts by schools to enhance the students' transition experience form Year 10 to Years 11 and 12.

Some of the concerns the teachers identified related to poverty in the home such as the cost of school uniforms, books and trips. The teachers also stated that their students, from disadvantaged areas, needed more personalised teaching and learning time with more teachers acting as mentors to the students. Years 11 and 12 course selection was also identified as problematic, as too often their students selected the 'easy' courses, rather than the ones that would assist their transition in University and VET, such as mathematics and science. The teachers noted that the process of becoming familiar with a new campus and new teachers, course selection, entry and enrolment processes were identified as the most difficult processes for their students to navigate without a trusted and informed teacher advocate.

RQ 4: Does a brief orientated to Years 11 and 12 course, enhance Year 10 students' future depictions of their self-identity?

Feedback from the students who participated in the brief orientation course indicated that they found the course interesting and beneficial as a foundation to further education, training and employment opportunities. The findings also suggested preliminary support for the proposition that change in usage of education icons may evidence a change in their

educational self-identity. The more significant finding from the brief ordination course was the identitygrams of the participants became more dimensionally complex. Increased complexity was indicated by the increased use of icons across the range of dimensions the students were provided to depict their identity on the second occasion, after the course. There was no comparable increase in the complexity by the students in non-participant group. Some of the non-participants' symbolised conceptualisations of their identity even deteriorated between the first and the second data collection. The findings advocate that the brief Years 11 and 12 orientation course did bring about some changes in the students' icon complexity, and these changes were more in the selection of icons that related to aspirations for future education.

8.2 Linking the findings to research literature

The literature and government documents relating to participation in education up to and beyond Year 12 indicated that much is to be gained by young people attending school and participating purposefully in education up to Year 12 (Masters, 2011; OECD, 2012). Participation in the two final years of compulsory schooling is academically and developmentally important (Cote, 1997). The final two years of high school help provide adolescents with valuable identity self-understanding, specialised learning opportunities along with higher level foundational that facilities university and vocational learning (Gonski et al., 2011). Previously considered as extra schooling years, Years 11 and 12 are now recognised for their importance in scaffolding positive social, recreational and cultural development during adolescence. Adolescence is a developmental period when identity development accelerates because it is a developmental time when young people actively explore identity to understand and connect with who they are. Through social and cultural learning interactions with peers and adult mentors at senior secondary school, young people

are provided rich opportunities to develop their strengths, capacities and explore the uniqueness of their identity (Cote, 1997).

Enabling and encouraging young people to see how their continued participation in education can benefit them, their family and their community is important. Positive and rich education, cultural and social connections and experiences at school offer developmental opportunities that enrich and sustain personal wellbeing and resource identity development. The acquisition of cultural, social and education capital gained through education participation in adolescence supports identity development and this enables young people to build a strong and viable sense of self, place and purpose (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, 2012).

Valuing education participation as a construct of identity enhances other viable dimensions of identity. Dimensionally rich and psychologically safe learning opportunities and experiences at school provide a climate for children and young people to develop and build rich and resilient identities, that then offer them a viable way forward. The last two years of school, in particular, appear to be critically linked to post-school participation in community, work and further study. The link between the viability of the developing identity and successful education participation becomes highlighted as young people move from generalist areas of learning, knowledge and skill acquisition in junior secondary school to more specialised study and vocational training programs in senior secondary school and beyond. A strong and resource-rich identity facilitates and activates education decision-making. This enables more motivated and purposeful participation in study programs or pathway courses in senior secondary level school and beyond.

8.3 Conceptual Framework

The study explored in depth how a school's community might influence the development of disadvantaged students' educational identity. The conceptual framework and methodological approach employed a socio-ecological lens (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1992), in order to investigate ways in which the socio-economic environmental influences of a student's particular school and community might influence their education identity development. The socio-ecological approach supported the study's consideration of the part played by the mesosystemic and exosystemic contexts. This approach incorporated the investigation of how the school resource environment influences students' education participation in the transition period between junior (more generalist study) and senior (more specialist study) secondary school. The research enquiry collected microsystemic identity data from the student participants and mesosystemic and exosystemic data from teachers working in the schools the student participants attended. The mesosystemic and exosystemic data provided important information on how social, cultural, sub-cultural and political contexts operated as spheres of influence on students' participation decisions about specialist study choices, options and opportunities. The socio-ecological approach provided the study with a theoretical and methodological lens through which to view school as an education environment influenced by complex external factors.

The socio-ecological approach broadened the method of studying student identity from the psychological to include consideration of sociological dimensions of the issue. The broader data collection and analysis enabled the researcher to explore more deeply the relationship between identity as a psychological concept and education participation occurring within a sociological context. The socio-visual student data pertained to identity, which sits at the heart of the microsystemic socio-ecological sphere, and the data from the

teachers pertained to the mesosystemic and exosystemic spheres of influence on the students' participation at school. School is a place that sits within the microsystemic and the mesosystemic spheres in the socio-ecology of each student. The researcher hoped that the two different data sets from the students and the teachers would enhance and complement each other and facilitate better understanding of how the school environment influences adolescent identity development and impacts education participation decision-making during education transition.

8.4 Research Context

Educational transition occurring in the developmental period of adolescence is a critical education participation time. It is a time when the students themselves want more say in education participation decisions and when participation decisions are better when informed by rich identity construct and sound identity strengths understanding (Abrams & Hogg, 1990; Cote, 1996; Cote & Schwartz, 2002; Geijsel & Meijers, 2005; Meeus, 1996).

The identity literature that informed the research indicated how identity is developed, constructed and sometimes deconstructed throughout life, yet the period of adolescence is considered as the most active period of identity development. Beginning from birth, home life, family relationships, life opportunities and life experiences all play a role and influence identity development. Each person's experiences and understanding of these experiences inform how their identity develops. From our earliest years and experiences through to our final years and experiences, our identity develops and changes (Cote,1997).

The school location of the teacher and student participants in the study was important to the investigation. At the time of this study and at the time of writing, political and community attention in Tasmania was focused on improving secondary education attainment and on increasing education participation options through to Year 12. The challenges faced

by the Tasmanian government and specifically the Tasmanian Department of Education in providing equal access to quality education for all Tasmanian young people were significant. Both rural and urban Tasmanian young people face barriers to accessing quality education and training. Even in affluent countries like Australia, access to quality education and training options often depends on the social, cultural and economic resources available to the student and their family.

8.5 Reflecting on Methodology

This study's methodology took an iterative, inductive approach (O'Reilly, 2008) using mixed qualitative and quantitative methods that were multi-staged and multi-layered. The inductive approach reflected the researcher's social ethnographic perspective as a teacher and care worker of disadvantaged students and offered insights not provided by singularity of methods (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). Important aspects of iterative and inductive qualitative methodology informed the methodological design, which adopted a constructivist approach to qualitative analysis (Charmaz, 2014).

The intent of this research was to understand better why these urban young people were the least likely to participate meaningfully in and complete senior secondary school and to contribute the findings of the study to the body of research investigating school retention and attainment. The researcher believed that it was essential to the integrity of the research that the investigation of the circumstances and impact of disadvantage on students attending schools located in disadvantaged urban areas considered how the disparities in access to social and cultural resources is experienced. Students' high levels of socio-economic disadvantage at home are also experienced by the public school located within their community (Gonski et al., 2011). An exploration of these issues was conducted through the inclusion of teacher narratives within the methodology. The narratives were provided by a

small group of committed and experienced teachers working in two low SES schools. In Tasmania and other places around the world there are pockets and populations of young people who live in stressed and disadvantaged communities, disaffected by school and further education because the learning offered to them is not of personal interest and not future employment viable (Illeris, 2006). The achievement of this qualification provided the students with greater education opportunities (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009; Cote & Levine, 1987).

The design process drew on the researcher's understandings of adolescence experienced as a developmental period and on young people's familiarity with web-based visual communication using mobile phone technology. The research also drew on understandings gained through the research literature that highlighted how traditional education research methods have difficulty reaching and engaging some young people (Ivey, 2012; Prosser, 2012). The design process was primarily concerned with overcoming one of the most significant challenges when using traditional research methods with young and harder to reach participant groups, ensuring the data are authentic (Prosser, 2006). In addition, the approach drew on participatory research models, as outlined by Fraser and Open (2004); Grinnel and Unrau (2011) and Sheppard (2004). In this approach the focus is on the voice of the participant and how that individual functions within context.

8.6 Theoretical Positions Supported

This study has adapted a socio-ecological (Bronfenbrenner & Ceci, 1994; Rogoff; 1990, 1998) and a social capital (Cote, 1996, 1997; Shim, 2008; Freire, 1985; Te Riele, 2007) theoretical position to focus on education retention and engagement. The findings of this research lend support to the theoretical position of social capital because that students in the more disadvantaged communities used fewer icons in their collage profiles. For Cote (1996,

1997), understanding self-identity involved individuals addressing for themselves how their broader culture settings and their own identity development interact. In part, the theoretical position of self-identity and social capital shares with Bronfenbrenner and Ceci (1994) the idea that the ecological and cultural context, within which the individual is located, influences and shapes that individual's behaviours, actions, and thinking. Using Bronfenbrenner (1994) terminology the students in this orientation study showed some level of enhancements to their use of icons because of their mesosystemic learning experience that may have extended their exosystemic (home) experiences. Bronfenbrenner's (1994) model maintained that because of the interactions between the individual and his/her close and wider social groups the individual over time typically adopts and reflects the values and beliefs of the social environment in which that individual is located. The Cote (1996) concept of 'identity capital' is derived from an interaction between the individual and a set of variables that are drawn from the person's macro and micro culture settings, as well as the person's own psychological processing.

This variation in icon numbers and selection by different cohorts of students in this study aligns with the research of Rogoff (1990, 1998) and her theoretical position of context and its influence on a person's cognitive and psychological development. For Rogoff the community and its institutional and cultural practices are influential in forming a student's identity that is appropriate to the standards, beliefs and practices of that person's host community. That is, an individual's cognitive and psychological development is formed and influenced by social context in which it occurs and by the individual's active observational and involvement in his/her communities as guided by the individual's more capable peers and adults.

For some students from disadvantaged settings, the teacher interview data suggested that extension social and cultural experiences were rarely offered outside of the school

participation. The teachers also noted that as a consequence of reduced experiences and home poverty the students' self-perceptions of their future expectations were reduced. This finding links to a number of theoretical positions raised in the thesis. It supports the theoretical position that self-identity is formed from feedback from others and the personal experiences of the individual, as articulated by Hattie (2014) and Marsh, Craven and McInerney (2003). That is, teachers and parents over time help craft a narrative about the worth of the student within a schooling context. The findings in this study thus lend support to Hattie's argued that self-identity is considered important in education because it has a direct and indirect influence on a person's decision making, levels of motivation and engagement with tasks. In particular, analysis of the teacher interview data noted that the students from disadvantaged settings often had low self-confidence about schooling and higher rates of disengagement form school. This finding is consistent with the theoretical position of Ross (1966) and Wilson et al. (2011) who maintained that low academic self-identity is associated with students who disengage and reduce their participation in education. From this perspective teachers and educators operate with in a position of influence by providing the students in their class with feedback and information on their academic and school performance in comparison to the students' peer group.

This notion that teachers operate from a positive of influence and their messaging impacts on their students' self-identity, beliefs and actions links with the theoretical position of Bourdieu (1991) and his research on the way language and power are implicated in conceptions of the self. The claim is, that over time the message provided by the teacher and others can privilege one group over another, which in turn helps to form the person's self-identity status in society over time (Barkhuizen, 2016; Bourdieu, 1991). Thus, over time the message provided by the teacher and others can privilege, exclude and disempower one group over another, which in turn helps to form each person's self-identity, status and

position in society over time (Barkhuizen, 2016; Bourdieu, 1991). Once students accept their self-identity, their hopes for the future will impact their investment and engagement in schooling and the language and literacy practices of a given classroom (Norton 2016).

Bourdieu's (1991) theoretical position that across societies disadvantage is entrenched because of the privileging of one group over another as noted in this thesis has also been explored by (Teese, 2007). Teese argued that while rich nations have invested in education, they have left in place many of the structural barriers that maintain social inequity, such as elite schools and universities for the wealthy. There is some support for the Teese argument in the Tasmanian teacher interview data. The teachers in this study stated that to shift the students out of poverty and their disadvantage settings is going to require additional investment in resources and service. This statement aligns with Tesse's (2007) theoretical position that while governments have encouraged greater overall participation, they have not necessarily made the qualitative changes needed to reduce major gaps in achievement and opportunity for these in less privileged positions of power and influence. That is, policy makers have kept structures of social differentiation in place by failing to provide the additional resourcing and services to those in the greatest need (Lamb et al., 2004; Teese, 2011).

In this study the Tasmanian teachers articulated the Gonski et al. (2011) argument that if Australia wants to enhance its long-term economic viability it must invest in education and particularly in the education of students from disadvantaged locations. It is worth noting that the students in the orientation program reported that they 'enjoyed' and gained from the program because it was activity based and linked to the community in which the students were located. This finding connects with critical pedagogy theoretical position of Freire (Freire, 1985, 1986; Shor & Freire, 1987) of how to enhance students' sense of empowerment in their schooling. From a critical pedagogy perspective, empowerment assists

students achieve higher levels of self-awareness, self-actualization, self-status and self-identity (Freire, 1985, 1986; Shor & Freire, 1987). The student interview data obtained at the end of the orientation program suggested that active participation was valued by the students and the students reported that the program assisted them plan better for their Years 11 and 12 and future experiences.

This notion of engagement and focussing on students' future plans and long-term goals is a core aspect of critical pedagogy as noted by Dinarvand and Imani (2008) and is a relevant consideration in term of effective transition programs from Year 10 to Years 11 and 12. Dinarvand and Imani (2008) also noted that from a critical pedagogy perspective the language of instruction and assessment needs to be in a form that does not exclude students. The identitygram technique used icons as a form of language that participants could use to express their identity without being dependent of writing about these beliefs. The indications are that the students identified with the identitygrams because they depicted aspects of the young participants' own environment and community. Connectedness between students and their education is noted as important by a number of theoretical positions reported on in this study including those of Bourdieu (1986, 1991), Freire (1985, 1986) and Teese (2011). Identitygrams made in early secondary school offer a tool to educators to assist them to identify, develop, broaden and/or focus individual students' development and learning options. Such an approach has a history in art therapeutic research with children and youth (Kinniburgh, Blaustein, Spinazzola, & van der Kolk, 2005) but the indications are that it has application particular for those students who have difficulties in expressing themselves in words or are disengaging from schooling (Kinniburgh et al., 2005).

8.7 Implications

This research presents an alternative way of understanding the part played by secondary school participation in young people's identity development and in understanding how such participation can provide flow-on benefits to the broader community. Ongoing investment in resources for secondary education has the potential to provide governments with long-term economic and social rewards. This is because education participation to Year 12 is linked to long term economic advantages to the individual and society (Gonski et al., 2011; Skills Australia, 2011). Year 12, or the equivalent vocational training of Level III, is now the minimum preferred education outcome for all young people (Department of Education, Tasmania, 2016). The interviews with teachers noted that parents and students often had a poor understanding of the transition points between VET courses and senior schooling. The teachers also noted that that there was a poor understanding of how the AQF framework supports an alternative incremental study pathway to work or university. For students living in communities of disadvantage the indications are they often lack an understanding of how opportunity and schooling are closely linked and influence decision-making (Shor, 1992).

Senior secondary schools play a vital role in contributing to future state growth in human capital and developing and value adding the contribution Tasmanian young people make to the economy. The secondary school transition period between Year 10 and Year 11 in Tasmania is pivotal. As the orientation to Years 11 and 12 program identified, students in Year 10 benefited from the opportunity: firstly, to engage in reflecting on what skills they needed to manage senior secondary schooling; and secondly, to gain an understanding that Years 11 and 12 is an essential pathway and progression into the adult world of work. The important point is that transition activities need to be provided in Year 10 to prepare students for transition into specialisation study in Years 11 and 12. This is particularly important in

Tasmania that has separate, central senior secondary campuses that cater for students from a diverse range of high school locations. This transition from often-small rural high schools into a larger urban senior school has been a noted issue of concern in Tasmania for some time (Abbott-Chapman et al., 2011). Even so, one of the ongoing challenges facing senior secondary schools in Tasmania is having adequate specialist teachers in different locations to cater to the needs of all senior secondary students (Cranston et al., 2016).

The school culture and how it directly and indirectly encourages and engages its students influences the ongoing learning and aspirations of students (Te Riele, 2007). Based on the teacher interviews in this study the teachers recognised this need to engage their students. These teachers also recognised the need to know their students and to develop relationships between teachers, support staff and students. Schools in economically disadvantaged communities often have families without the means to provide their children with cultural and social experiences that would help to inform the students' self-identity (Schwart et al., 2011). The research findings are supportive of the notion that a lack of safe and successful life experiences outside school leaves many young people academically vulnerable at school (Swan, 2010). In addition, the research findings are supportive of the argument that students living in communities of disadvantage are often so experientially poor and low in sense of self, the students become passive and disengaged (Shor, 1992; Yoder, 2000; Lin, 2000). Countering this sense of passivity for these students is a challenge. Even so the indications are that the use of icons to encourage students to talk and reflect of their aspirations and the orientation courses preparing students to transition into senior school are two mechanisms that have the potential to counter students' passive participation in schooling.

In their interviews, teachers from schools located in disadvantaged areas spoke of the importance of foundational identity work with their students in Years 7 to 10 to facilitate

participation in senior secondary school. As noted already these teacher observations align with the theoretical work of Bourdieu (1986, 1991), Bynner and Parsons, (2002), and Cote (1996). Economic disadvantage is linked to experience disadvantage and a reduction in social capital, that affects the ability of the individual to become more socially mobile. This lack of experience outside of the home encouraged the students to be more ambivalent or more resistant towards ongoing education participation. For many students who participated in this study the opportunity to reflect on their personal strengths and capacities using the icons provided them with the opportunity to develop their confidence to progress onto Years 11 and 12

The current transition arrangements for students to access vocational training courses in senior secondary school appear to be creating barriers to some students' successful participation. Transition barriers particularly affect students who are experiencing social and/or educational disadvantage, who are anxious or have a poor junior secondary school academic record as noted by Cranston et al. (2016) and Swan (2010). For example, some students, whose only understanding and experience of education has been failure, will decide not to participate in transition administration and course interview processes because these processes are so alien to them and they are so unsure of themselves. It is important that secondary schools collaborate to identify and remedy any transition and course selection processes which might create potential blocks to participation to ensure they promote the inclusion of students from all Tasmania's different social, economic and cultural backgrounds.

8.8 Limitations, Further Research, Conclusion

Limitations

In part this was an explorative research study to investigate the viability and feasibility of the identitygram approach in self-identity research with youth. The reality is such an approach has its limitations and so the generalisation of the findings has to be considered. The researcher developed a pool of 80 icons that were copyright free and located on the web. Although the researcher was familiar with the adolescent age group, the relevance of this set of 80 icons is a consideration. Even though a pilot study was conducted to test the validity of this set of 80 icons, the choice of icons is acknowledged as a possible limitation when interpreting the findings. It is recognised that there is a subjective element in this research. It was acknowledged from the start, that the identitygram is visual text and the principle of polysemicity applied, that is, there may be a range of possible meanings depending on any one person's interpretation. Polysemicity is acknowledged as a consideration when using the NVivo-12 (2016) software and why, in qualitative text and visual data analysis, the meaning generated from the data can be more idiosyncratic (Douglas & Nil Gulari, 2015). Interpreting the students' responses also included elements of grounded theory and its reliance on 'insight' by the researcher. As stated by Maher, Hadfield, Hutchings and de Eyto (2018) "Deep and insightful interactions with the data are a prerequisite for grounded theory interpretation and theory generation" (p. 1). Even so, a reliance on insight and interpretation may be considered a limitation of this research into adolescent students' self-identity.

The orientation to Years 11 and 12 course also had its limitation. First it was limited in duration and intensity and because self-identity is considered a stable structure (Hattie, 2014) the likelihood of it making any significant change to the participants' self-identity was not high. The orientation program did, however, provide an opportunity to further test the

identitygram methodology. This second cohort of students was from more disadvantaged communities than those included in the pilot study and there were differences in the contrast of the identitygrams between students from higher and lower SES settings. Again, because all the students in this study were from one city location and the total cohort of students was not large, the generalisation of the outcomes is a consideration.

There are cost and time considerations in applying the identitygram methodology. In this study each individual icon interview took at least 40 minutes. Then there was the analysis procedure using the Nvivo-12 (2016) software to interpret each collage. Comparing this methodology to a survey questionnaire approach, it is a more expensive and time-consuming methodology. For example, the SDQ II, Self-Description Questionnaire-II (Marsh, 1992) can be administered in a whole of class setting and completed in some 10 to 15 minutes. As such, the identitygram methodology's suitability for very large-scale research studies into students self-identity is a limitation for some research studies.

There are some design limitations that need to be considered that would impact on the generalisability of the findings, such as the age and gender of the participants. Although gender was indirectly reviewed in the students' identitygram, gender itself was not a focus of this research and, as such, additional research in this domain needs to be a consideration. The evidence is that there are gender differences in the self-profile of adolescent students, with Hattie (2000, 2016) noting that while adolescent girls typically perform at a similar standard to boys in the domain of mathematics, their self-concepts in mathematics are lower. Adolescent boys also rate their physical ability self-concept and their physical appearance higher that do girls. The reasons for these differentiations are assumed to because of different social and cultural messages and feedback given to adolescent girls and adolescent boys (Cote & Schwartz, 2002; Geijsel & Meijers, 2005; Marsh et al., 2003). The demographic characteristics of the Tasmanian students in this study may have also influenced the

outcomes of this research and so the generalisability of the findings. The main demographic characteristics of Tasmania compared to the other Australian states are its rural and regional nature and its higher level of welfare dependence (Abbott-Chapman et al., 2011; Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010a). In addition, Tasmania's school system has separate Years 11 and 12 campuses, from the Year 7 to 10 high schools campuses. This separation of campuses and thus lack of regular interactions between students and teachers who operate across the two types of schools may have been a 'cause' for the increased anxiety associated with Tasmanian students shifting from Year 10 to Year 11. This more 'unique' demographic characteristic of the Tasmanian school system has been identified by Cranston et al. (2016) as a possible reason for the State's poor school retention rates in Year 12. Again, such a demographic characteristic is likely to reduce the generalisability of the study's findings.

There is subjectivity in qualitative research that also needs to be acknowledged as the researcher is assumed to be able to make inferences and interpretations from the data (Charmaz, 2014) and so the findings may be more idiosyncratic (Douglas & Nil Gulari, 2015). This idiosyncratic aspect does reduce the generalisability of the findings. This is especially the case when the participant cohort is small in number and selected from a specific cohort (Aronson, 1995; Charmaz, 2014) as in this case of Year 10 Tasmania students located in one city location.

There are also limitations associated with how the data were collected that need to be acknowledged. Through this acknowledgement, the hope is it provides direction to future researchers interested in extending or even replicating this research study. The researcher used extensive field notes when working with the students on their identitygrams. Although field notes have a long history of use in qualitative research, they can be supplemented with transcript data (Creswell, 2008). Not having transcript data on all the conversations between the researcher and the students can be considered a limitation. On reflection, this limitation

could have been reduced if a video recording of the interactions between the student and the researcher was conducted. Such a procedure has application for future investigations. Because the focus of Research Question 1 was on the suitability of the icons as a method of investigating self-identity, there was an emphasis on the product the student produced, rather than on the talk that may have accompanied the development of this output. An extension study could include a research question that focused more on the conversations students had when developing their identitygrams. From an art therapy approach (Barone & Eisner, 2012) such an investigation has merit.

Future research

The students who participated in the main identitygram study were identified by their teachers as ambivalent about transitioning and continuing their education through to senior secondary school. Further research, however, still is needed with this identitygram methodology approach. Including a review of the selection of icons and their meaningfulness to a wider range of participants would be helpful. One of the main methods of investigating students' self-identity and self-concept has been using survey instruments (Hattie, 2014; Schwartz et al., 2011). Students are asked to respond to a set questionnaire and their obtained score on this self-concept questionnaire compared to the normed data. Based on this comparison a student can be considered to be in the average, above average, or below average range (Marsh et al., 2003). As noted, there are limitations and concerns with this form of self-identity survey instruments. Such questionnaires are associated with high incidences of incomplete, inconsistent, exaggerated, and acquiescent responding (Borgers et al., 2004; Keefer et al., 2013; Soto et al., 2008).

The development of other methods of ascertaining students' self-identity therefore needs to be encouraged. The indications are that identitygram approach explored and developed in this study has application, but additional research is needed to continue to verify this

approach. This verification could investigate the reliability of the 80 icons developed and if additional icons need to be considered. This research was conducted in one Australian state, however, how applicable the 80 icons are to other settings also needs to be further investigated.

Certainly, this study has identified that the use of icons and collages has application in an educational setting. Recognising that the identitygram method is more time consuming to administer it may have greater application when a more detailed self-identity analysis is required. For example, individuals at risk of self-harm, youth involved in domestic violence and the justice system often need a more detail assessment of their self-identity with such youths not always able to adequately express their feelings in words (Grigorenk, 2016; Schwartz et al., 2011). Additional trialling of the identitygram methodology, particularly with these significantly at-risk youth, has potential and implication for service delivery and action.

More research is needed to better understand the relationship between identity development and a range of background social, cultural and economic population factors, such as gender, age, location, family settings, types of schooling experience, as well as specific cohort such as migrant youth populations and indigenous students. Additional, research linked to the identitygram methodology may assist educators and others design and target curricular and pedagogic and other interventions. These programs may seek to enhance and strengthen a person's coping capacities and transition strategies that have a wider application across the life span.

Conclusion

The evidence is an identitygram (picture collage) provided the researcher with an investigative tool through which to explore students' aspirations and fears using a non-

threatening medium. The findings support the notion that the use of pictures (icons) produced a stable self-identity profile. This process encouraged Year 10 students to talk about themselves in an interview setting that enabled them to self-reflect.

The findings also denote that a brief Years 11 and 12 orientation course was followed by some changes in the Year 10 students' icon complexity. This change was more in the selection of icons that related to the students' aspirations for future education. Students from more disadvantaged settings associated themselves with fewer education related icons when developing their identitygram, compared to their peers from higher socio-economic locations. This lends support to the theory that the social context influences an individual's self-identity.

The teacher interview data noted that the students from disadvantaged communities typically lacked confidence about their future aspirations and had limited understanding of educational opportunities. The teachers recognised that in the Tasmanian context shifting from a Year 7-10 campus into a senior school Years 11 and 12 was problematic and preparing students for that transition could be enhanced. The critical finding is an identitygram methodology provides educators and others with a useful focusing tool when seeking to better understand and explore youth self-identity.

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Appendix A Student and Parents Information Pilot Study

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

This information sheet is for the parents or guardians of Grade 10 students who have been invited to participate in the **UTAS education research.**

This information sheet provides information to assist you in making a decision about if you wish your son or daughter to participate in a UTAS study to test the reliability of measures for education and training participation decision making.

Your son /daughter have been invited to participate in the study by the school. Only the school has access to you and your child's contact name and details. This letter has been addressed and sent to you via your son or daughter by the school.

You and your child's choice to participate are completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate then there are no consequences for you or your child.

The participation of your son or daughter involves no foreseeable risks.

The study is being conducted by Deborah Brewer who is a student researcher at the University of Tasmania undertaking a PhD in Education under the supervision of Kim Beswick, Associate Professor in Mathematics Education and Associate Dean (Research), University of Tasmania. The study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the researcher's PhD degree. Deborah is a registered teacher with the Department of Education, Polytechnic and a Community Services sector educator and practitioner.

What will your child do if they participate?

The pilot study is being conducted prior to the primary research. The primary research will be conducted in other high schools in southern Tasmania. The primary research seeks to support young people in their education and training participation decision making and provide young people.

The pilot study enables the research to measure aspects of individual's identity. The pilot will ask participating students to create an identitygram collage using icons. The collage and metaphor activities will be completed twice with a break between each activity.

Your permission is required before your son/daughter participates in the research collage activities

What happens if my son or daughter wishes to withdraw?

If at any time if your son/daughter changes their mind and no longer wishes to participate in the research they can advise the researcher or their teacher. Participants are free to withdraw at any time. If they withdraw, (or after five years after the end of the research in late 2017), any documents that they completed for the study will be returned to them or destroyed if they are unwanted or unable to be returned. During the time of the

research and after the research up until December 2017, other documents will be kept in a locked file at the University of Tasmania and only the researcher and the research supervisors will have access to the work.

How will I be provided information about the outcome of the study?

At the end of the study the researcher will provide the school a brief summary of the findings of the study. The results and findings of the study may also be published in academic journals.

At no time will individual students or their school be identified in any work published about the course or the study.

If you have any questions please phone the researcher Deborah Brewer on 6226 5225

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number H 12705.

What Next?

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Attached to this sheet is a written consent form. Please read the consent form, sign this if you give permission, or do not give permission for your son/daughter to participate in the study and please return to the school within three working days.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet for the

UTAS School of Education research.

STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

This information sheet is for Year 10 students who have been invited to participate in the UTAS education research.

This information sheet provides information is provided to assist you in making a decision about if you wish to participate in a UTAS study.

You are being invited to participate in a pilot study of two research activities. The activities take approximately 45 minutes in total to complete on two occasions. The two activities you will be invited to complete for the research are designed for your age

group. The intention of the research is for them to be completed with ease and to be enjoyable.

You have been sent this information about the study by your school. Only the school has access to your name and contact details. This information sheet and the attached forms have been addressed and sent to you via the school.

Your choice to participate is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate then there are no consequences, nothing will happen. There is no risk expected if you participate in the research.

If you agree to participate you will need to sign a consent form. Your consent form is included with this information package. If you do choose to participate your parent or guardian also needs to agree and sign their consent form. Their consent form is also included with this information sheet. Please discuss the study with them and if you both agree, return both the consent forms together to the school office.

The study is being conducted by Deborah Brewer who is a student researcher at the University of Tasmania undertaking a PhD in Education under the supervision of Kim Beswick, Associate Professor in Mathematics Education and Associate Dean (Research), University of Tasmania. The study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the researcher's PhD degree. Deborah is a registered teacher with the Department of Education, Polytechnic and a Community Services sector educator and practitioner.

What will you actually be asked to do if you participate in the study?

If you agree to participate then you will participate in class time. When you have finished you will return to your usual class. Participants do not need to bring anything with them.

Participants do the activities on their own. For the first activity participants will be asked to make a collage using icons. The pilot study wishes to find out if collages can be used by research to measure aspects of who young people are; their "identity". If you agree to participate you will be asked to create a collage. The activities will take about 45 minutes on two occasions.

Participants will be asked to repeat the exact same activities five days later. This is part of the requirements of the pilot study to test if the identity measure is reliable.

MacKillop College is being asked to participate in the study as the pilot school. The pilot study is being conducted prior to the primary research. The primary research will be conducted in two other high schools in southern Tasmania. The primary research seeks to measure how a VET program might support young people in their education and training participation decision making and provide young people with the opportunity to develop employability skills.

What happens if I want to withdraw?

If at any time participants change their mind and no longer wish to participate in the research, they can advise their home room teacher or the researcher. Participants are free to withdraw at any time without any consequence. Five years after the end of the research any documents that are your work completed for the study will be returned or destroyed if they are unwanted or unable to be returned. During the time of the research and after the research up until December 2017, the work will be kept in a locked file at the University of Tasmania and only the researcher and the research supervisors will have access to the work.

How will I be provided information about the outcome of the study?

At the end of the study the researcher will provide the school a brief summary of the findings of the study. The results and findings of the study may also be published in academic journals. At no time will individual students or their school be identified in any work published about the course or the study.

If you have any questions please phone the researcher Deborah Brewer on 6226 2552

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number H12705.

What Next?

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Attached to this sheet are the written consent forms. Please read the student consent form, sign this if you agree and your parent gives permission, to participate in the pilot study and please return to the school as soon as possible or within five working days.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet about the

UTAS School of Education research.

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

Upending education and training –beyond year 10

This consent form is for Year 10 students participating in the UTAS education pilot study.

I have read and understood the "Information Sheet" for this project.

1. I agree to take part in the research study named above.

2. The study has been explained to me.

3. I understand that the pilot study involves my participation in activities that seek to measure aspects of my identity and the study will be measuring how to support young people in their decision making after they finish grade 10.

4. I understand that the researchers do not believe my participation in the study has any risks that need to be considered.

5. I understand that all the information I provide will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania server data base and in locked files at the University of Tasmania premises for five years after the study is finalised in writing and then this information will then be destroyed unless I ask for it to be returned.

6. I understand that the researcher will keep what I provide to them confidential and that any information I supply for the study will be used only for the purposes of the research.

7. I understand that the results of the study will be published so that I and the school I attend cannot be identified.

8. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without any effect. I also understand that any information I have given can be returned to me up until June 30th 2013.

9. My questions about the research have been answered.

Student's name: _____

Student's signature: _____Date _____

Parent's name: _____

Statement by Investigator

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

☐ The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have had the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Investigator's name:

_____

Investigator's signature: _____

Date: _____

PARENT CONSENT FORM

Upending education and training –beyond year 10

This consent form is for the parents or guardians of Year 10 students participating in the UTAS education research.

I have read and understood the "Information Sheet" for this project.

1. I agree for my son/daughter to take part in the research study named above.

2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.

3. I understand that the study involves my son /daughter participating in activities that seek to measure aspects of identity and the measures may in the future support young people in their education and training participation decision making.

4. I understand that participation involves no foreseeable risks.

5. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania server data base and in locked files at the University of Tasmania premises for five years from the publication of the study results, and will then be destroyed unless my son or daughter wishes to have the data returned.

6. I understand that the researcher will maintain confidentiality and that any information I supply to the researcher will be used only for the purposes of the research.

7. I understand that the results of the study will be published so that I and the school my son/daughter attends cannot be identified.

8. I understand that my son/daughters participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw them from the study at any time without any effect. If I so wish, I may request that any data I have supplied be withdrawn from the research until June 30th 2013.

9. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

Student's name: _____

Parent's name: _____

Parent's signature: _____Date: _____

Statement by Investigator

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

☐ The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have had the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Investigator's name: _____

Investigator's signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B Student and Parents Information Main Study

Education and Training- Beyond Year 10

This information sheet is for the parents/guardians of grade 10 students who have been invited to participate in the **UTAS education research.**

This information sheet provides information to assist you in making a decision about if you wish your son or daughter to participate in a UTAS study to measure education and training participation and decision making.

Your son /daughter have been invited to participate in the study by the school. Only the school and the PPO have access to you and your child's contact name and details. This letter has been addressed and sent to you via your son or daughter by the school.

The study is being conducted by Deborah Brewer who is a student researcher at the University of Tasmania undertaking a PhD in Education under the supervision of Kim Beswick, Associate Professor in Mathematics Education and Associate Dean (Research), University of Tasmania. The study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the researcher's PhD degree. Deborah is a registered teacher with the Department of Education, Polytechnic and a Community Services sector educator and practitioner. The study has the approval from the Department of Education, Tasmania and the school Principal.

Your choice, and your child's choice to participate are completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate then there are no consequences for you or your child.

The participation of your son or daughter involves no foreseeable risks.

What will your child do if they participate?

The researcher will ask participating students if they wish to participate in the research activities;

- creating identity collages on two occasions and participating in two brief interviews about their collages
- answering survey questions about training

The activities and associated interview will take approximately 30 minutes. The activities will be conducted at the school by arrangement with teachers and the principal to ensure there is no interruption to your son /daughters learning. They will be asked to do the activities twice.

Your permission is required before your son/daughter participates in any of the research activities.

What happens if my son or daughter wishes to withdraw?

The school's Pathway Planning Officer will work with the researcher so participants can individually address questions, issues or concerns that may arise during or after the course. If at any time your son/daughter changes their mind and no longer wishes to participate in the research they can advise the researcher or their PPO. Participants are free to withdraw at any time. If they withdraw, (or after five years after the end of the research in late 2017), any documents that are their work completed for the study will be returned to them or destroyed if they are unwanted or unable to be returned. During the time of the research and after the research up until December 2017, the work will be kept in a locked file at the University of Tasmania and only the researcher and the research supervisors will have access to the work.

How will I be provided information about the outcome of the study?

At the end of the study the researcher will provide to each participant, their parent or guardian, the school and to the Tasmanian Education Department a brief summary of the findings of the study. The results and findings of the study may also be published in academic journals.

At no time will individual students or their school be identified in any work published about the study.

If you have any questions please phone the researcher Deborah Brewer on 6226 2552.

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number H12705

What Next?

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Attached to this sheet are two written consent forms, one for you and one for your son or daughter. Both forms need to be returned for your son or daughter to participate. Please read the consent form, and sign this if you give permission, for your son/daughter to participate in the study and return to the school within three working days.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet out the UTAS School of Education research.

Education and Training- Beyond Year 10

STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

This information sheet is for Grade 10 students who have been invited to participate in the UTAS education research.

This information sheet provides information to assist you in making a decision about if you wish to participate in a UTAS study.

In Grade 10 young people are thinking about their future plans and making decisions about continuing at school or leaving school to seek employment. The research seeks to gain understanding of how high schools can support and assist young people in Grade 10 make future pathway decisions.

You are being invited to participate in several activities related to the study.

The researcher will ask participating students if they wish to participate in any of the three research activities;

- creating identity collages and be interviewed about their collages
- answering survey questions

The word matching and collage activities and associated interview will take approximately 30 minutes. The activities will be conducted at the school by arrangement with teachers and the principal to ensure there is no interruption to your learning. You will be asked to do the activities twice.

The intention of the study is for the activities to be completed with ease and to be enjoyable.

You have been invited to participate in the study by the school. Only the school has access to your name and contact details.

Your choice to participate is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate then there are no consequences, nothing will happen. There is no risk expected if you participate in the research.

If you agree to participate you will need to sign a consent form. The consent form is included with this information package. If you do choose to participate your parent or guardian also needs to agree. Their consent form is also included with this information sheet. Please discuss the study

with them and if you both agree, return both the consent forms together to your school office.

The study is being conducted by Deborah Brewer who is a student researcher at the University of Tasmania undertaking a PhD in Education under the supervision of Kim Beswick, Associate Professor in Mathematics Education and Associate Dean (Research), University of Tasmania. The study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the researcher's PhD degree.

What will you actually be asked to do if you participate in the study?

Participants who agree to be part of the study will be invited to do activities. The activities will be completed individually. The researcher will ask participating students to create a collage, be interviewed about their collage, and answer a small number of survey questions.

For the first activity participants will be asked to make a collage from icons. The icon collage will depict aspects of who young people are; their "identity". Participants will then be interviewed briefly about the collage they made. The interviews will take approximately 10 minutes.

If you agree to participate you will do the activities at a convenient time during class in a class room at the school. You will not need to bring anything with you. When you have finished you will return to your usual class.

Participants will be asked to repeat the exact same activities. This is part of the requirements of the study.

Your consent is required before participation in any research activities.

What happens if I wish to withdraw from the study?

The Pathway Planning Officer will work with the researcher, so you can address questions, issues or concerns that may arise. If at any time you change your mind and no longer wish to participate in the research you can advise the researcher, your teacher or the PPO. Participants are free to withdraw at any time without any consequence. If you withdraw, (or after five years after the end of the research), any documents that are your work that you have completed for the study will be returned to you or destroyed if they are unwanted or unable to be returned. During the time of the research and after the research up until December 2017, the work will be kept in a locked file at the University of Tasmania and only the researcher and the research supervisors will have access to the work.

How will I be provided information about the outcome of the study?

At the end of the study the researcher will provide the school a brief summary of the findings of the study. The results and findings of the study may also be published in academic journals. At no time will individual students or their school be identified in any work published about the course or the study.

If you have any questions please contact the researcher Deborah Brewer on 6226 5225 or deborah.brewer@utas.edu.au

"This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number [Hxxxxx]." **What Next?**

This information sheet is for you to keep. Attached to this sheet are two consent forms, one is for you and one is for your parent or guardian. Please read the consent form and if you and your parent/ guardian both agree you can participate please sign and return both forms to the school office within three working days.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet about the UTAS School of Education research.

Education and Training –Beyond Year 10

This consent form is for Grade 10 students participating in the UTAS education research in Term 3, 2012 and May 2013.

- I have read and understood the "Information Sheet" for this project.
- The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.
- I understand that the study involves measuring how a specific program might support young people in their education and training participation decision making.
- I understand that participation involves no foreseeable risks.
- I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the

University of Tasmania server data base and in locked files at the University of Tasmania premises for five years from the publication of the study results and will then be destroyed unless my son or daughter wishes to have the data returned.

- I understand that the researcher will maintain confidentiality and that any information I supply to the researcher will be used only for the purposes of the research.

- I understand that the results of the study will be published so that I and the school I attend cannot be identified.

- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw them from the study at any time without any effect. If I so wish, I may request that any data I have supplied be withdrawn from the research until June 30th 2013.

- I understand the researcher will re-contact in 2013 by email (or if need be by phone) to invite me to participate in a follow up on-line survey about education and training participation and other recreation and sports activites and agree to provide these details to the researcher for that purpose.

- Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

PLEASE TURN OVER PAGE TO SIGN AND COMPLETE CONSENT FORM

(Please circle YES or NO to the questions below)

I agree to take part in the following research activities described in the information sheet attached.

- *creating identity collages and be interviewed about their collages*

(circle) YES or NO

- *answering survey questions*

(circle) YES or NO

Student's name: _____

Student's contact email _____

Student's signature: _____Date _____

Parent's name: Parent's Contact Phone No.

_____ _____

This contact name and number is optional and will only be used for the purpose of this research to assist the researcher to contact the student in 2013 should the email contact provided become inoperable.

Education and Training –Beyond Year 10

This consent form is for the parents/guardians of grade 10 students participating in the UTAS education research.

1. I have read and understood the "Information Sheet" for this project.

2. I understand consent is required before my son/daughter participates in any of the research activities and can give consent to the course or/and the research by signing the enclosed consent form and returning this to the school in the envelope provided.

3. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.

4. I understand that the study involves measuring how to support young people in their education and training participation decision making.

5. I understand that participation involves no foreseeable risks.

6. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania server data base and in locked files at the University of Tasmania premises for five years from the publication of the study results, and will then be destroyed unless my son or daughter wishes to have the data returned.

7. I understand that the researcher will maintain confidentiality and that any information I supply to the researcher will be used only for the purposes of the research.

8. I understand that the results of the study will be published so that I and the school I attend cannot be identified.

9. I understand that my son's /daughter's participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw them from the study at any time without any effect. If I so wish, I may request that any data I have supplied be withdrawn from the research until June 30th 2013.

10. I understand the researcher will re-contact my son or daughter in 2013 by email (or if need be by phone) to invite my son or daughter to participate in a follow up online survey about education and training participation and other recreation and sports activities and agree to them providing these details to the researcher for that purpose.

11. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

PLEASE TURN OVER PAGE TO SIGN AND COMPLETE CONSENT FORM

I agree for my son/daughter (insert name) ……

to take part in the following research activities described in the information sheet attached.

- creating identity collages and be interviewed about their collages

(circle) YES or NO

- answering survey questions

(circle) YES or NO

Student's name: _____

Parent's name: Parent's Contact Phone No.

_____ _____

Parent's signature: _____Date: _____

Statement by Investigator

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

√ The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have had the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Investigator's Name: Deborah Brewer

Investigator's signature:

Date: 9th November 2012

Appendix C Student and Parents Information for Course Participation

This information sheet provides information to assist you in making a decision about if you wish your son or daughter to participate in a Certificate One Community Services VET course and a UTAS study to see if the course has been beneficial to participants.

Your son or daughter is thinking about their future plans and making decisions about continuing their education or leaving school to seek employment or work based training. I would like to invite your son/daughter to participate in a Vocational Education Training course (national code CHC10108) to assist them in making future pathway decisions. . This invitation is made from referral by the Pathway Planning Officer who believes your son/daughter will benefit from this course because they remain uncertain about their future plans.

The CHC10108 VET course aims to support young people in their education and training participation decision making and provide young people with the opportunity to develop employability skills. The program will provide information about education and training and entry level training in vocational education. The short course is a nationally recognised qualification, Certificate I in Community Services Work (CHC10108). The course provides participants with employability skills in competencies such as workplace communication and occupational health and safety.

The CHC10108 course is provided by Polytechnic Tasmania. The primary teacher of the course is Deborah Brewer who is a student researcher at the University of Tasmania undertaking a PhD in Education under the supervision of Kim Beswick, Associate Professor in Mathematics Education and Associate Dean (Research), University of Tasmania.

The course is free.

Costs associated with conducting the course and the study will be met by the University of Tasmania. If your son/daughter successfully completes the course the Certificate One Community Services qualification will be issued by the Tasmanian Polytechnic.

Your son/daughter has been invited to participate in the course because the school's Pathway Planning Officer (PPO) believes they may benefit from participation. The PPO believes the course may assist them in their decision about what they would like to do in 2013.

Only the school and the Pathway Planning Officer have access to you and your child's contact name and details. This letter has been given to your son/daughter by the school's Pathway Planning Officer.

You and your child's choice to participate are completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate then there are no consequences for you or your child.

Participation involves no foreseeable risk. If you would like your son/daughter to participate in the course but not the research please indicate this on the consent form.

What will your child do if they participate?

Course Information

The young people who participate in the CHC10108 course will attend their high school as normal. The program will be delivered at the school within the normal school timetable, with the scheduling of specific CS Certificate I classes made in consultation with the Principal and senior members of the school's teaching co-ordination team. Classes will take place in the final weeks of term three. The Certificate One course will take approximately 10 hours per week over three weeks to complete.

The CHC10108 course was chosen because the content will focus students' knowledge and learning on interpersonal skills and decision making. Competencies such as communication, working cooperatively, decision making, career development, occupational health and safety are included alongside the underpinning knowledge of critical thinking and broader social issues such as inclusion. The three units in the Certificate One course build students' personal resources and employability skills. Assessment validation for the CHC10108 course will be conducted by Polytechnic Community Services senior teachers.

The units the qualification requires students to participate in and be assessed against are;

BSBCMM101A Apply basic communication skills	CHCCS211A Prepare for work in the community sector	HLTWHS200A Participate in Workplace OHS processes

Research Information

The research is being conducted to see if and how the course may be beneficial to your son/daughter. To find this out, the teacher will ask those students who are also

participating in the research to complete a short word matching exercise, create a social collage, be interviewed about their collage and answer survey questions.

The word matching and collage activities and associated interview will take approximately

30 minutes. These activities will be conducted at the school by arrangement with teachers and the principal to ensure there is no interruption to your son /daughters learning. They will be asked to do the activities twice, just before they commence the course and again at the conclusion of the course.

You and your son/daughters consent is required before your son/daughter participates in any of the research activities. You can give your consent to the course or/and the research by signing the enclosed consent form and returning this to the school in the envelope provided.

You do not have to permit your child to participate in the research for them to take part in the course.

What happens if my son or daughter wishes to withdraw?

The Pathway Planning Officer will work with the researcher so participants can individually address questions, issues or concerns that may arise during or after the course.

If at any time you or your son/daughter changes their mind and no longer wishes to participate in the research they are free to do this and you can advise the researcher or their PPO. If they wish to withdraw from the research at any time, they can continue with the course. If they wish to withdraw from the course, they may return to normal classes without any consequence. Participants are free to withdraw at any time. If they withdraw, (or after five years after the end of the research in late 2017) , any documents that are their work completed for the study will be returned to them or destroyed if they are unwanted or unable to be returned.

During the time of the research and after the research up until December 2017, the work will be kept in a locked file at the University of Tasmania and only the researcher and the research supervisors will have access to the work.

How will the course be assessed?

All CHC10108 course work submitted for assessment will be marked and then validated by the teacher and two senior teachers. All assessments are completed and results entered onto the Polytechnic, Department of Education system within six weeks of the conclusion of the course. All participants who successfully complete the course will receive a certificate of their qualification that is accredited and recognised nationally.

At the end of the study the researcher will provide to the school and to the Tasmanian Education Department a brief summary of the findings of the study. You can request a copy of this summary. A copy of the final research document will also be provided to the school. The results and findings of the study may also be published in academic journals.

At no time will individual students or their school be identified in any work published about the course or the study.

If you have any questions please email or phone the researcher Deborah Brewer on

Deborah.Brewer@utas.edu.au or 6226 5225

"This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number [Hxxxxx]."

What Next?

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Attached to this sheet is a written consent form. Please read the consent form, sign this if you give permission or do not give permission for your son/daughter to participate in the course and the study and please return to the school within three working days. The course commences on <insert date> 2012.

If you give permission and your son/daughter has chosen to participate in the course, your will receive further details and information closer to the date of the course commencing.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet out about the course and the UTAS School of Education research.

This consent form is for the parents/guardians of Year 10 students participating in the UTAS education research.

1. I have read and understood the "Information Sheet" for this project.

2. I understand consent is required before my son/daughter participates in any of the research activities and can give consent to the course or/and the research by signing the enclosed consent form and returning this to the school in the envelope provided.

3. I understand my son/daughter can take part in the course and choose not to participate in the study.

4. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.

5. I understand that the study involves measuring how a specific program might support young people in their education and training participation decision making.

6. I understand that participation involves no foreseeable risks.

7. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania server data base and in locked files at the University of Tasmania premises for five years from the publication of the study results, and will then be destroyed unless my son or daughter wishes to have the data returned.

8. I understand that the researcher will maintain confidentiality and that any information I supply to the researcher will be used only for the purposes of the research.

9. I understand that the results of the study will be published so that I and the school I attend cannot be identified.

10. I understand that my son/daughters participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw them from the study at any time without any effect. If I so wish, I may request that any data I have supplied be withdrawn from the research until June 30th 2013.

11. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree for my son/daughter (insert name) ……

(Please Circle YES or NO)

to take part in the Community Services Certificate course described in the information sheet attached.

YES NO

to take part in the research named above.

YES NO

Student's name: _____

Parent's name: Parent's Contact Phone No.

_____ _____

Parent's signature: _____Date: _____

Statement by Investigator

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

☐ The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have had the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Investigator's name:

_____

Investigator's signature: _____

Date: _____

INFORMATION SHEET

This information sheet is for Year 10 students who have been invited to participate in the CHC10108 course and the UTAS education research.

This information sheet provides information to assist you in making a decision about if you wish to participate in the CHC10108 course and the UTAS study. You can participate in the course without needing to participate in the study.

CHC10108 Course Information

In Year 10 young people are thinking about their future plans and making decisions about continuing at school or leaving school to seek employment. I would like to invite you to participate in a Vocational Education Training course (national code CHC10108) to assist in making future pathway decisions.

The CHC10108 program will provide information about education and training and an entry level training qualification in vocational education. The CHC10108 short course is a nationally recognised qualification, Certificate I in Community Services Work (CHC10108). The vocational education course provides employability skills in competencies such as workplace communication and occupational health and safety.

If you choose to participate in the CHC10108 course you will attend high school as normal. The program will be delivered at the school within the normal school timetable, with the scheduling of specific CS Certificate I classes made in consultation with the Principal and senior members of the school's teaching co-ordination team. Classes will take place in the final weeks of term three. The Certificate One course will take approximately 10 hours per week over three weeks to complete.

The CHC10108 course provides knowledge and learning around interpersonal skills and decision making. Competencies such as communication, working cooperatively, decision making, career development, occupational health and safety are included alongside the underpinning knowledge of critical thinking and broader social issues such as inclusion. The three units in the Certificate One course build students' personal resources and employability skills. Assessment validation for the CHC10108 course will be conducted by Polytechnic.

The CHC10108 Qualification

The qualification requires students to participate in and be assessed against;

BSBCMM101A Apply basic communication skills

CHCCS211A Prepare for work in the community sector

HLTWHS200A Participate in Workplace OHS processes

Information about the Research

If you choose to take part in the CHC10108 course you will also be invited to participate in UTAS research. If you wish to participate in both the course and the research you need to complete the required consent forms. You can choose to participate in the course and not the research.

If you choose to take part in both CHC10108 and also take part in the research you will be invited to participate in several research activities separately to the CHC10108 course work. The activities are designed for your age group. The research activities are designed to be completed with ease and to be enjoyable.

The research is being conducted to see if and how the course may be beneficial to you. To find this out, the teacher will ask those students who are also participating in the research to complete a short word matching exercise, create a social collage, be interviewed about their collage and answer survey questions on-line about their education and training plans and out of school recreational activities. For the first activity participants will be asked to make a collage from icons. The icon collage will depict aspects of who young people are; their "identity. Participants will then be interviewed about the collage they made.

If you agree to participate you will do the activities at a convenient time during class in a class room at the school. You will not need to bring anything with you. When you have finished you will return to your usual class.

Participants will be asked to repeat the exact same activities. This is part of the requirements of the research.

More Information about Participating

You have been invited to participate in the CHC10108 course and the research by the school's Pathway Planning Officer (PPO). You have been sent this information by your school. Only the school has access to your name and contact details. This information sheet and the attached forms have been addressed and sent to you via the school.

Your choice to participate is completely voluntary. If you choose not to participate then there are no consequences, nothing will happen. There is no risk expected if you participate in the research.

If you wish to participate in the CHC10108 course and/or participate in the UTAS research you will need to sign a consent form. The consent form is included with this information package. If you do choose to participate your parent or guardian also needs to agree. Their consent form is also included with this information sheet. Please discuss the study with them and if you both agree, return both the consent forms together to your school office.

The study is being conducted by Deborah Brewer who is a student researcher at the

University of Tasmania undertaking a PhD in Education under the supervision of Kim

Beswick, Associate Professor in Mathematics Education and Associate Dean (Research), University of Tasmania. The study is being conducted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the researcher's PhD degree.

After the course, participants will also be asked to complete a short survey.

Your consent is required before participation in any research activities.

What happens if I wish to withdraw from the study?

The Pathway Planning Officer will work with the researcher so you can address questions, issues or concerns that may arise. If at any time you change your mind and no longer wish to participate in the research you can advise the researcher, your teacher or the PPO. Participants are free to withdraw at any time without any consequence. If you withdraw, (or after five years after the end of the research), any documents that are your work that you have completed for the study will be returned to you or destroyed if they are unwanted or unable to be returned. During the time of

the research and after the research up until December 2017, the work will be kept in a locked file at the University of Tasmania and only the researcher and the research supervisors will have access to the work.

How will I be provided information about the outcome of the study?

At the end of the study the researcher will provide the school a brief summary of the findings of the study. The results and findings of the study may also be published in academic journals. At no time will individual students or their school be identified in any work published about the course or the study.

If you have any questions please contact the researcher Deborah Brewer on 6226 5225 or deborah.brewer@utas.edu.au

"This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number [H12705]." **What Next?**

This information sheet is for you to keep. Attached to this sheet are two consent forms, one is for you and one is for your parent or guardian. Please read the consent form and if you and your parent/ guardian both agree you can participate please sign and return both forms to the school office within three working days.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet about the UTAS School of

Education research

STUDENT CONSENT FORM

This consent form is for Year 10 students participating in the UTAS education research.

- **I have read and understood the "Information Sheet" for this project.**
- **I understand I can choose to or not to participate in the CHC10108 course.**
- **I understand I can give my consent or not give my consent to participate in the research activities.**
- **I understand I can choose to take part in both the course and the study or just the course.**
- **I understand I can advise the researcher of my intentions to participate in the course and/or the research by completing and signing this consent form and**

returning this with my parent's or guardian's consent form to the school in the envelope provided.

- **I understand that the study involves measuring how a specific program might support young people in their education and training participation decision making. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.**

- **I understand that participation involves no foreseeable risks.**

- **I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania server data base and in locked files at the University of Tasmania premises for five years from the publication of the study results, and will then be destroyed unless my son or daughter wishes to have the data returned.**

- **I understand that the researcher will maintain confidentiality and that any information I supply to the researcher will be used only for the purposes of the research.**

- **I understand that the results of the study will be published so that I and the school I attend cannot be identified.**

- **I understand my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw them from the study at any time without any effect. If I so wish, I may request that any data I have supplied be withdrawn from the research until June 30th 2013.**

- **Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.**

(Please insert your name and circle YES or NO to the questions below)

I (name) ……

Agree to take part in the Community Services Certificate course described in the information sheet attached.

(circle) YES or NO

Agree to take part in the research described in the information sheet and on this consent form.

(circle) YES or NO

Student's name: _____

Student's contact email

_____

Student's signature: _____*Date* _____

Parent's name: *Parent's Contact Phone No.*

_____ _____

This contact name and number is optional and will only be used for the purpose of this research to assist the researcher to contact the student in 2013 should the email contact provided become inoperable.

Statement by Investigator

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

☐ The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have had the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Investigator's name:

_____

Investigator's signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D Information and Consent Form Teacher Participants

Information Sheet

For Principals, Educational Leaders, Pathway Planning Officers and Youth Learning Officers.

The study is being conducted by Deborah Brewer who is a student researcher at the

University of Tasmania undertaking a PhD in Education under the supervision of Kim

Beswick, Associate Professor in Mathematics Education and Associate Dean (Research), University of Tasmania. The study is being conducted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the researcher's PhD degree. Deborah is a registered teacher with the Department of Education, Polytechnic and a Community Services sector educator and practitioner.

The primary aim of the research is to investigate effective strategies influencing the decision of "at low risk" young people to remain engaged in education or training.

Adult Participants in the study are key stakeholders such as principals, teachers, PPO's and YLO's. Key stakeholders will be asked to participate in the study .

The teacher research questions will include:

What educational factors do you believe influence young people's decision whether or not to continue on to Year 11?

What types of high school programs and interventions do you believe can be effective in retaining young people in education and training post Year 10? Can you provide an example?

Are you aware of any difficulties or barriers young people experience in following their Year 11 academic and/or vocational education plan?

This research is particularly focused on the students who may not complete Year 11. In your professional experience, what behaviours and characteristics would identify young people who belong to this group?

What systemic change is needed to increase student engagement in education and training post year 10 in Tasmania?

School principals, senior teachers, PPOs and YLOs will be able to comment on what they believe is needed and effective in engaging low level at risk of not continuing students in education and training post year 10 and hence contribute to addressing retention concerns in Tasmania as well as other Australian states and territories.

How will I be provided information about the outcome of the study?

At the end of the study the researcher will provide to the school and to the Tasmanian Education Department a brief summary of the findings of the study. The results and findings of the study may also be published in academic journals.

At no time will individuals or their school be identified in any work published about the course or the study.

If you have any questions please phone the researcher Deborah Brewer on 6226 5225

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study, please contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. Please quote ethics reference number H12705.

What Next?

This information sheet is for you to keep.

Attached to this sheet is the written consent form. Please read the consent form, and sign this if you wish to participate, and return the form to your school office for later collection by the researcher. An email will be sent to those who agree to participate.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet out the UTAS School of Education research.

Deborah Brewer

Deborah.Brewer@utas.edu.au

62262552 - 0439490016

Please contact me if you require any additional information or have any questions.

This consent form is for Principals, Educational Leaders, Pathway Planning Officers and Youth Learning Officers, Department of Education and Non-government Education, Tasmania participating in the UTAS education research.

1. I have read and understood the “Information Sheet” for this project.

2. I agree to take part in the research study named above.

3. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.

4. I understand that the study involves measuring how a specific program might support young people in their education and training participation decision making.

5. I understand that participation involves no foreseeable risks.

6. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania server data base and in locked files at the University of Tasmania premises for five years from the publication of the study results, and will then be destroyed unless my son or daughter wishes to have the data returned.

7. I understand that the researcher will maintain confidentiality and that any information I supply to the researcher will be used only for the purposes of the research.

8. I understand that the results of the study will be published so that I and the school cannot be identified.

9. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without any effect. If I so wish, I may request that any data I have supplied be withdrawn from the research until June 30th 2013.

10. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name: _____

School: _____

Contact email: _____

Signature: _____Date: _____

Statement by Investigator

If the Investigator has not had an opportunity to talk to participants prior to them participating, the following must be ticked.

The participant has received the Information Sheet where my details have been provided so participants have had the opportunity to contact me prior to consenting to participate in this project.

Investigator's name: _____

Investigator's signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix E Course Information Form for Schools

Upending education and training – Beyond Year 10 Project

Course Information Sheet for Principals, Educational Leaders, Pathway Planning Officers and Youth Learning Officers

The study is being conducted by Deborah Brewer who is a student researcher at the University of Tasmania undertaking a PhD in Education under the supervision of Kim Beswick, Associate Professor in Mathematics Education and Associate Dean (Research), University of Tasmania. The study is being conducted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the researcher's PhD degree. Deborah is a registered teacher with the Department of Education, Polytechnic and a Community Services sector educator and practitioner.

The research study seeks to measure how a specific program might support year 10 young people in their education and training participation decision making and provide them the opportunity to develop employability skills. The study involves offering a nationally recognised qualification, Certificate I in Community Services Work (CHC10108) short course to students who are considered to be at a low level of risk of not continuing onto Year 11. The vocational course provides participants with employability skills in competencies such as workplace communication and occupational health and safety. The research is being conducted to see if the course is beneficial to students transitioning to Year 11. To find this out, the study will compare a low level of risk of not continuing group who participates in the course at one Tasmanian high school with a matched group that does not participate in the course at another Tasmanian high school.

CHC10108 – Course Information

The CHC10108 course is provided by Polytechnic Tasmania as the RTO. The student researcher will be the primary teacher of the course. She is a qualified teacher and registered and employed by Department of Education, Tasmania. The course will be free to the school and the participants. Costs associated with conducting the course and the study will be met by the University of Tasmania. The Certificate One Community Services qualification will be issued by Tasmanian Polytechnic to those students who successfully complete the course.

The study seeks to identify approximately 16 to 20 students you consider to be a low level risk of not continuing on to Year 11 in each of the schools that agree to participate. These students would be invited to participate in the study.

PPO's at the two primary research schools will be asked to meet with the students invited to participate and provide the selected students with information about the research along with the consent forms to take home and return to the school.

The research is being conducted to see if the course is beneficial to students transitioning to Year 11. To find this out, the study will compare a group who participates in the course with a group that does not participate in the course.

The young people who participate in the CHC10108 course would attend school as normal. The program will be delivered at the school within the normal school timetable, with the scheduling of specific CS Certificate I classes made in consultation with the Principal and senior members of the school's teaching co-ordination team.

The CHC10108 course was chosen because the content will focus students' knowledge and learning on interpersonal skills and decision making. Competencies such as communication, working cooperatively, decision making, career development, occupational health and safety are included alongside the underpinning knowledge of critical thinking and broader social issues such as inclusion. The three units in the Certificate One course build student's personal resources and identity. Validation of the assessment marking for the CHC10108 course will be conducted by a team and will include two senior (AST1) teachers in Polytechnic Community Services.

The units the qualification requires students to participate in and be assessed against are;

BSBCMM101A Apply basic communication skills

CHCCS211A Prepare for work in the community sector

HLTWHS200B Participate in workplace OHS processes

Contact details:

Deborah Brewer

Deborah.Brewer@utas.edu.au

62262552 - 043

Please contact me if you require any additional information or have any questions.

Appendix F Letter to Schools

Deborah Brewer
UTAS
Education Faculty
Ph 6226 2552
0439490016
Deborah.Brewer@utas.edu.au

Department of Education Tasmania.

Dear -------,

I am writing to initiate discussion with you in regards to the proposed University of Tasmania research project with a view to conducting a study with a number of Year 10 students at schools in South East Tasmania. Low SES High Schools in southern Tasmania will be asked if they wish to be part of the study.

The research study seeks to measure how a specific program might support Year 10 young people in their education and training participation decision-making and provide them the opportunity to develop employability skills. The study involves offering a nationally recognised qualification, Certificate I in Community Services Work (CHC10108) short course to students who are considered by PPO's and YLO's to be at a low level of risk of not continuing onto Year 11. The vocational course provides participants with employability skills in competencies such as workplace communication and occupational health and safety.

Currently I am studying for my PhD at the University of Tasmania and am a registered teacher with the Department of Education, and the Tasmanian Polytechnic. The CHC10108 course will be provided by Polytechnic Tasmania as the RTO. I would be the primary teacher of the course as a student researcher who is a qualified teacher and registered and employed by Department of Education, Tasmania. The course would be free to the school and the participants. Costs associated with conducting the course and the study will be met by the University of Tasmania. The Certificate One Community Services qualification will be issued by Tasmanian Polytechnic to those students who successfully complete the course.

If you agree, I would like to ask the school's Pathway Planning Officers and Youth Learning Officers to identify approximately 16 to 20 students they consider to be a low level risk of not continuing on to Year 11. These students would be invited to participate in the study. I would also ask if the PPO's could provide the selected students with information about the research along with the consent forms to take home and return to the school.

The young people who participate in the CHC10108 course would attend school as normal. The program will be delivered at the school within the normal school timetable, with the scheduling of specific CS Certificate I classes made in consultation with the Principal and senior members of the school's teaching co-ordination team.

The CHC10108 course was chosen because the content will focus students' knowledge and learning on interpersonal skills and decision making. Competencies such as communication, working cooperatively, decision making, career development, occupational health and safety are included alongside the underpinning knowledge of critical thinking and broader social issues such as inclusion. The three units in the Certificate One course build student's personal resources and identity. Validation of the assessment marking for the CHC10108 course will be conducted by a team and will include two senior (AST1) teachers in Polytechnic Community Services.

The units the qualification requires students to participate in and be assessed against are;

BSBCMM101A Apply basic communication skills

CHCCS211A Prepare for work in the community sector HLTWHS200B Participate in workplace OHS processes

Students who have consented to participate in the research will be invited to create a social and identity collage, participate in an interview about the collage and answer survey questions.

The student participants will be asked to do the collage activities twice.

At the end of the study the researcher will provide to the participants, their parents or guardians, the school and the Tasmanian Department of Education a brief summary of the findings of the study. A copy of the final research document will also be provided to the school. The results and findings of the study may also be published in academic journals. At no time will individual students or participating schools be identified in any work published about the course or the study.

The study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have any questions, please phone the researcher Deborah Brewer on 6226 5225.

Yours Sincerely,

Deborah Brewer

Appendix G Participant Instructions – Identity Capital Collage

Participant Instructions –Collage

Identitygram Procedure Pilot Student Group

(This information augments 4.7.3)

For the Pilot, the student participants met as a group outside the school library. I had earlier arranged in the library individual tables for each student. Each table was placed at least 1.5 metre separate from each other and positioned so that each student faced the same way forward but not face each other. On each of the tables I had placed an identitygram kit. Each kit contains;

- a set of icons printed in colour (random order) on 4 X A3 sheets of paper,
- two A3 pieces of paper that only have a fine very large oval printed on them,
- a set of coloured markers (textas).
- a pair of scissors, and
- a glue stick.

Once ready the researcher invited the students to come in to the library, choose a table and sit down but not yet touch the items on their table.

After they had settled into their seats the researcher thanked the students for being part of the research and began to read the narrative instruction script (see Appendix G). NOTE: *The same script was used through-out the research for students making their identitygram collages.*

The script tells student participants that it is important that during the activity they did not to interact or speak, look at or comment on what they were doing with others, this included not speaking to the researcher.

The purpose of the activity is described in the narrative script. The script tells the students that the purpose of the activity was for them to create two of their own unique collages selecting and using what they were provided in the way they wished. They would have around 10 minutes to make each of their two collages.

The first step was to use one of the coloured textas to write their name in the centre of the two A3 papers with the large circles and place one aside for now. Once the students

had put their name on the blank collages the narration invites the students to place one of the blank (except for the oval) A3 papers well away, for now, as they only need one of the blank papers for now. They were going to use this paper to make their first collage.

The student participants are then asked to begin to think about who they are and what is important to them (it tells the students that the first collage is about who they are NOW).

The student participants are then invited to begin, and the students begin selecting the icons depicting things they like and value to represent items and people important to them from the icon group provided (see Appendix H) they use the scissors to cut them out and glue them on the A3 paper.

At the end of ten minutes the students are asked to finish up their NOW collages but remain silent. The completed collages are collected quickly but carefully (as wet from glue) and placed separately on a large table away from the students to dry. The students are then asked to put the left-over icon materials they had not used to complete first collage away - on the floor. They are asked to keep the scissors, drawing textas and glue and then place their second blank A3 paper with the circle and their name on it in front of them.

They are then each given, by placing in front of them, a second complete new set of icons to create their second collage.

The students are told they have completed their first collage that was NOW and now they will use their second blank circle A3 with their name in the centre to forecast three years into the FUTURE and create their FUTURE collage using icons. Again, they are asked to think about and project what they think will be important to them in three years' time and what represents what they think their lives will be like in three years' time.

After ten minutes the students are asked to finish up. The pilot group were not interviewed. They were thanked for their participation and asked to leave their desks as they are with their completed FUTURE second future identitygram on the table and quietly leave.

The Pilot Group analysis compared NOW with NOW and FUTURE with FUTURE to test the reliability of the technique.

The identitygram data was collected in the Pilot using the same approach twice with one week's break between the first and second occasion.

Main Study

The researcher will prepare a space where the participant can work on the collage individually. The instructions will be read out to participants prior to the collage activity.

Give participant two A3 sheets of prepared paper.

"The activity you are about to do needs to be done by you on your own without interference, so I ask that you not talk to each other or comment or speak to other people while we are actually doing the collages. I will give you some time later to talk with each other about your identitygram, if you wish. The identitygram collage making activity has two parts. I have given you each two pieces of paper. Both sheets have two small ovals in the centre. Please write your name inside <u>both</u> of these small ovals.

The <u>first part</u> of the activity uses one of the sheets of paper. Put the other sheet of paper to the side so you can use it later.

*On this <u>first sheet of paper</u>, the large outer oval represents you,… **<u>right now.</u>***

Give participant one set of icons.

You are going to create your own identitygram. I am giving you sheets of different icons you can use to create your identitygram. There are 72 picture icons and 42 people icons that you can cut out and paste on your sheet of paper. There are also some blank squares on the last page. I will give you some time later after the main collage is completed to use these blanks, if you wish, to create and include your own icons in the identitygram if there is an item or items missing from those provided that you want to include.

You can group the people icons together, if you wish, to create a larger group of people to represent a team or group. There are scissors, glue and textas for you to use if you wish to make your own icons.

Please take a few minutes to look at all the icons available"…. You are going to paste the icons onto your identitygram to create a collage. When you place the icons will determine its importance to you. Closer to your name is more importan. Further waay are still important but not as important to you. Please ask me any questions if you are unsure about what to do"

Allow time for participant to look at all the icons available, and then give out the scissors, glue sticks and textas.

*"Think about your life **right now,** in the oval create a collage using the icons. Create a collage that tells a picture story of **who you and what you do, right now.** Show the people who are important in your life, what your life is like and what things are important to you in your life.*

You can use the icons of people in any way you like. If you want, you can put initials next to the people icons so you know who the icons represent. You can also put the people icons next to the picture icons if they relate to each other.

I can allow about 10 minutes for you to complete the collage"

When student looks like they are near completion (or after 5 minutes…)

"There is a little more time for you to finish your first collage. If an icon you feel is important to represent a part of who you are and what you are interested in is not there and you wish to draw your own in a blank square, do this now. Once you have drawn your icon or icons and add it to your identitygram collage by pasting your drawn icon onto your identity gram with the prepared ones.

Researcher places the NOW completed collage in a box labelled NOW school A or NOW school B or 1st PILOT or 2nd PILOT.

Researcher gives out another set of icons to the participant student.

"When you are ready, take the other sheet of paper you have been given. It has two ovals like the first; the small inner oval is where you have written your name.

The outer large circle represents ***you in the future*** *in three years' time. Think forward about your life* ***in three years time****; create this next collage using the next set, these are the same icons. Create an IN THE FUTURE collage that tells a picture story of who you think you will be and what you want and think you will be doing three years from now. Show in the collage what you think your life will be like in what things and people will stay important to you and what new things and people will become important to you in your life.*

I can allow about 5 minutes for you to complete the collage"

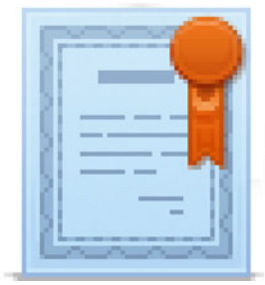
When student looks like they are near completion (or after 4 minutes…)

"Do you want two more minutes to finish your first collage?

Researcher places the FUTURE completed collage in a box labelled FUTURE school A or FUTURE school B

" Thank you for participating in the activity"

Appendix H Icons– Identity Collage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	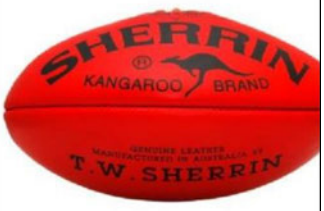 SHERRIN KANGAROO BRAND T.W. SHERRIN	
		

		

		
		

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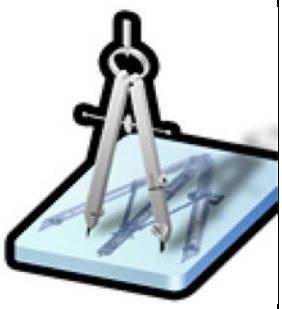
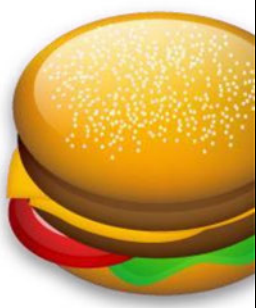
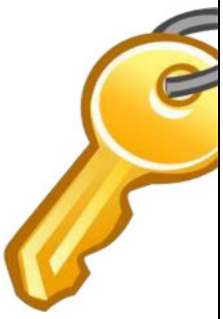
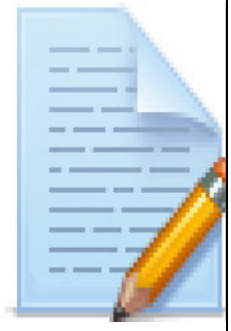
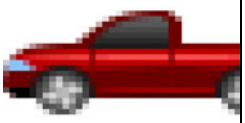
		
		

Appendix I Student Feedback Form

Participant Training Evaluation

Certificate I in Work Preparation (Community Services) CHC10108

Date of Completion of Training

Teache Location

Please complete this evaluation at the conclusion of the training session. It is important to complete this in detail and to be frank in your observations. As a teacher, I'm always seeking ways to improve my training design and delivery. In addition, completion of this form is necessary for quality assurance and development.

If you would like to discuss your training, please contact Deborah Brewer at Deborah.brewer@utas.edu.au

You participated in three units that were part of the qualification CHC10108 Certificate Level 1 in Work Preparation (Community services) the first three questions below ask you about the three different units, the other questions are about the training course overall.

5 – strongly agree 4 – agree **Please rate your level of agreement on whether the** 3 – neither agree nor disagree **learning outcomes for the training were attained.** 2 – disagree 1 – disagree strongly					
1. The unit - BSBCMM101A Apply basic communication skills has provided me with useful	5	4	3	2	1

skills and knowledge for communicating in the workplace.					
2. The unit - CHCCS211B Prepare for work in the community sector has provided me with useful skills and knowledge about working in the community sector.	5	4	3	2	1
3. The unit HLTWHS200A Participate in OHS processes has provided me with useful knowledge for workplace safety and health.	5	4	3	2	1
4. Overall the training content was useful.	5	4	3	2	1
5. I can use the information to assist me in my decisions about future education,	5	4	3	2	1

training and work.					
6. Teacher involved participants in learning activities.	5	4	3	2	1
7. What part did you like the most and was the most valuable thing you learned and why?					
8. What didn't you like and was of least value to you and why?					
Additional Comments:					

THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART IN THE UTAS CHC10108 COURSE

Appendix J Student Post Identitygram Interview Narrative

Student Post Collage Interview

Narrative Questions

The following questions are asked after the collages are completed - on the two occasions.

"Thank you for talking with me."

Researcher places the 'now' collage in front of the young person.

"Firstly, let's look at the first collage you made" " This is the you, NOW, identity collage".

1. Can you tell me why you chose these particular icons for your NOW collage?

2. Do you think the NOW collage portrays an accurate picture of your identity, that is who you are and what is important to you?

(If YES continue)

3. (if NO ask…) What is missing from the collage that is important to your identity?

"Now can we look at the second 'in the future' collage you made …"

Researcher places the second collage in front of the young person.

4. Can you tell me about some of the icons in your FUTURE collage and why they are there?

5. Are there aspects of your future identity collages that have surprised you or made you curious about your future?

"Thank you for talking with me."

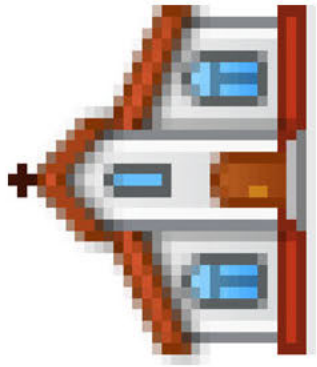
Researcher says good bye to student.

Appendix K Icon Categories– Identity Collages

Recreation Relaxation (22)	

Education (4 + 8)	Outcome Education Icons	Process Education Icons
Food (5)		
Money (4)		

Transport (6)	
Work (8)	
Nature (2)	

     	 	   
Household (6)	Health (2)	Animals (4)

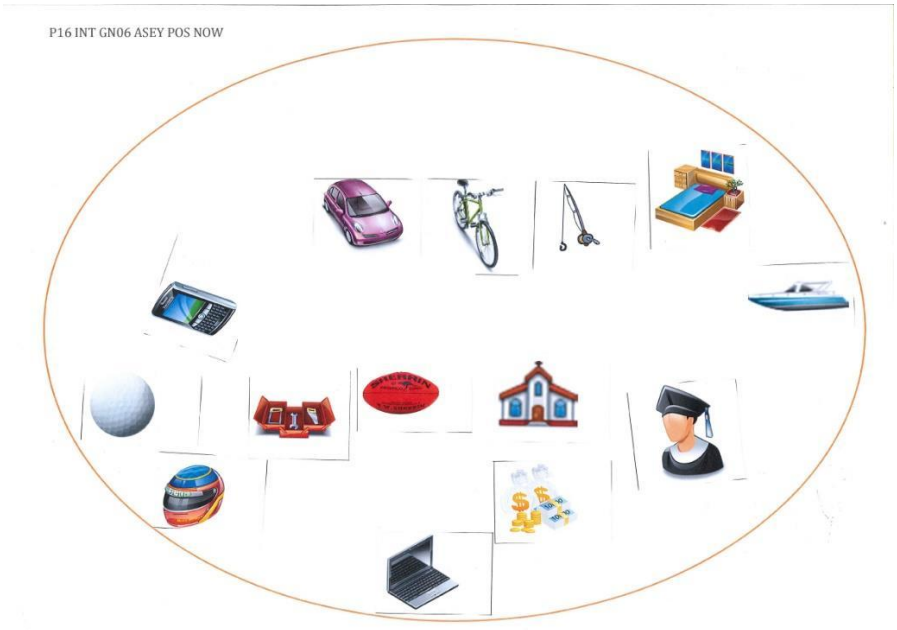
Relationships (6+11)

Appendix L – Identity Collages Main Study

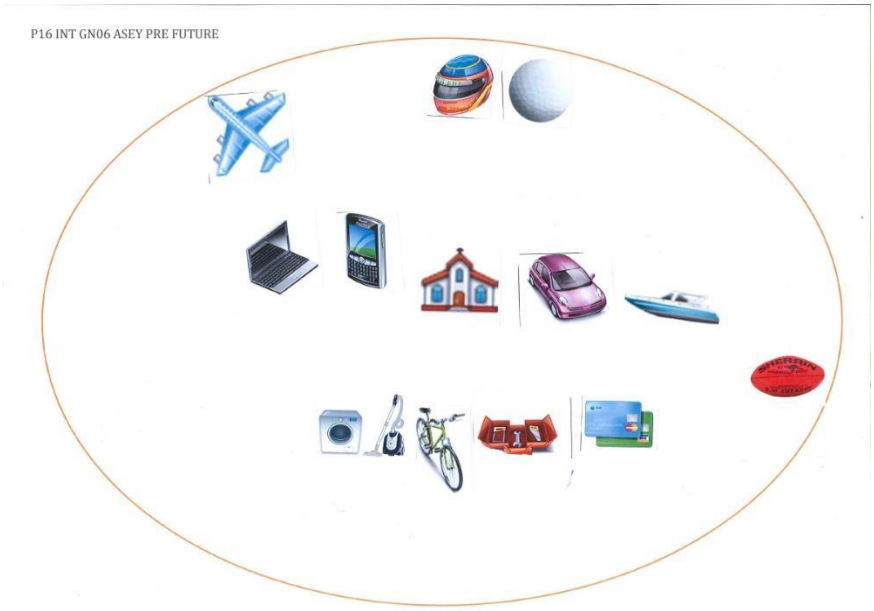
Participant 13 – EDON – PRE & POST - NOW

Participant 13 – EDON – PRE & POST - FUTURE

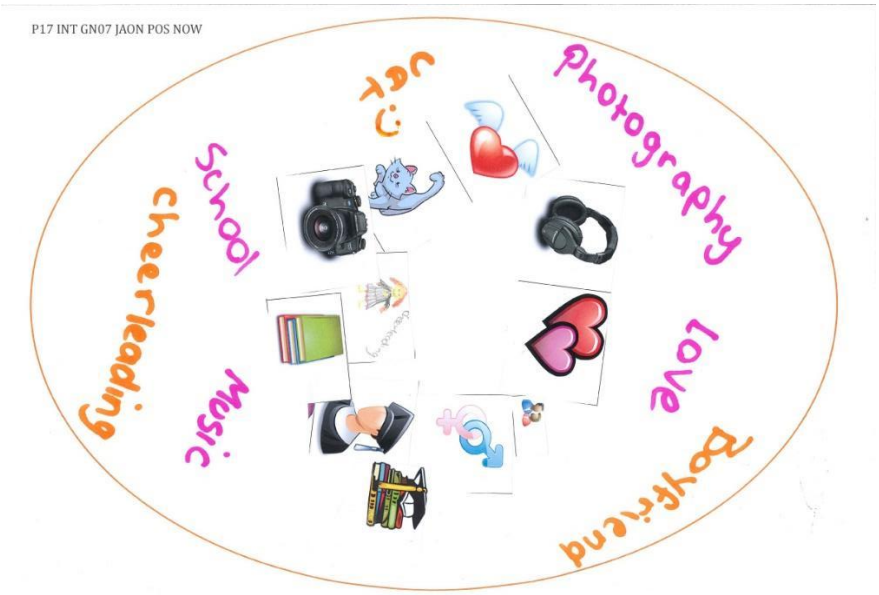
Participant 16 – ASEY – PRE & POST - NOW



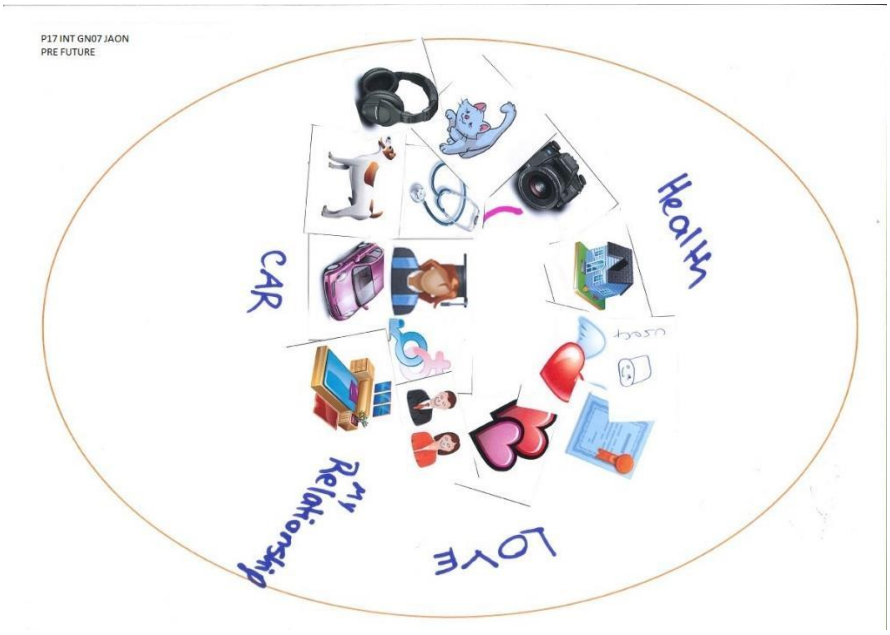
Participant 16 – ASEY – PRE & POST - FUTURE



Participant 17 – JAON – PRE & POST - NOW

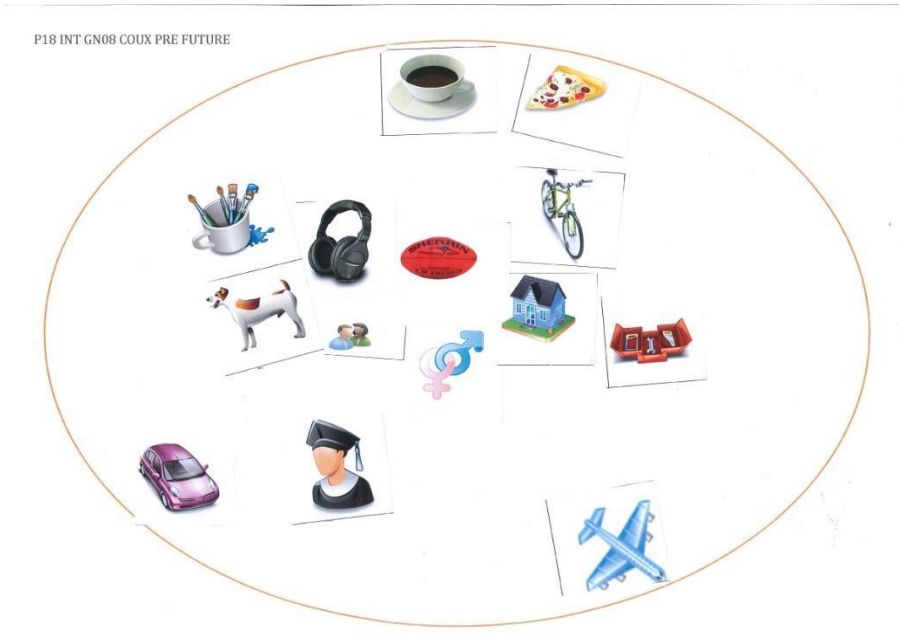


Participant 17 – JAON – PRE & POST - FUTURE

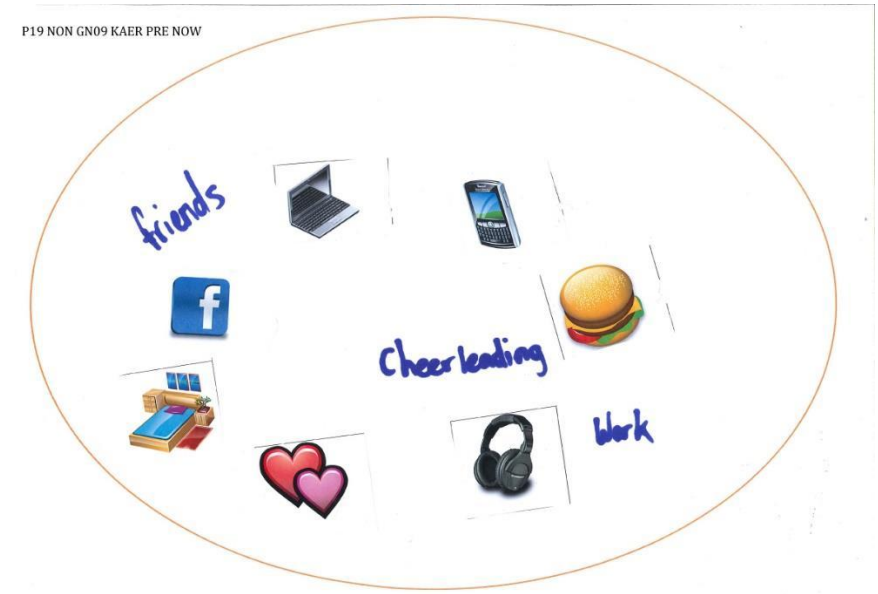


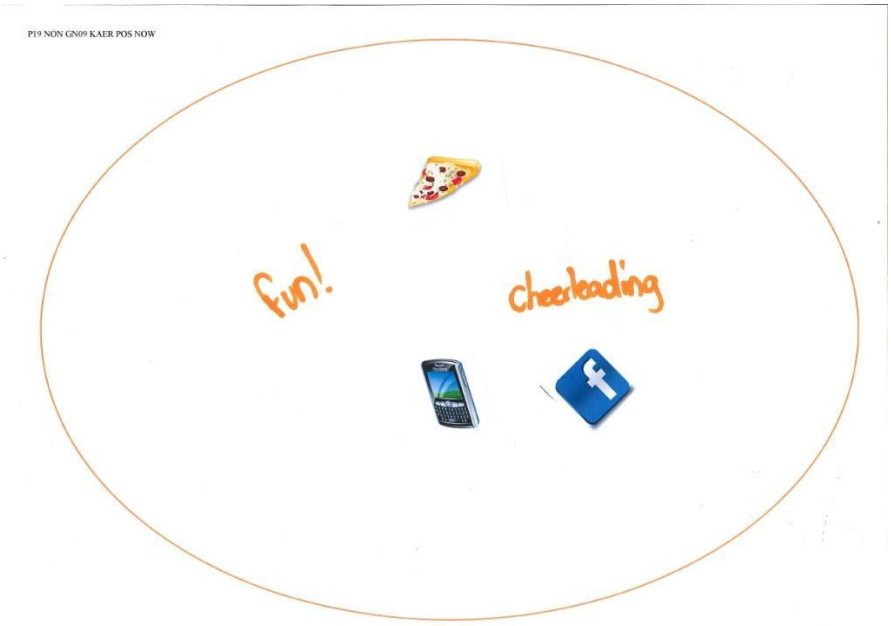
Participant 18 – COUX – PRE & POST - NOW

Participant 18 – COUX – PRE & POST - FUTURE

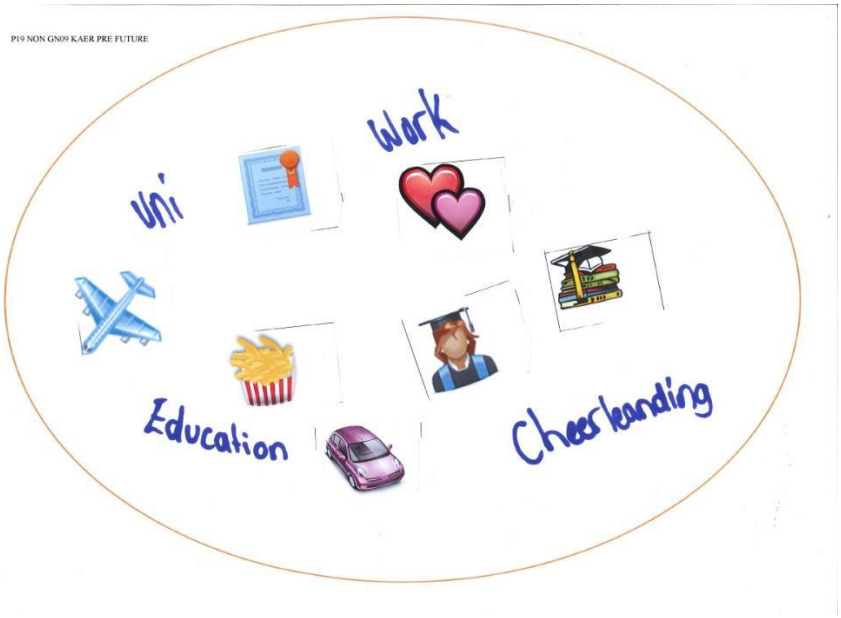


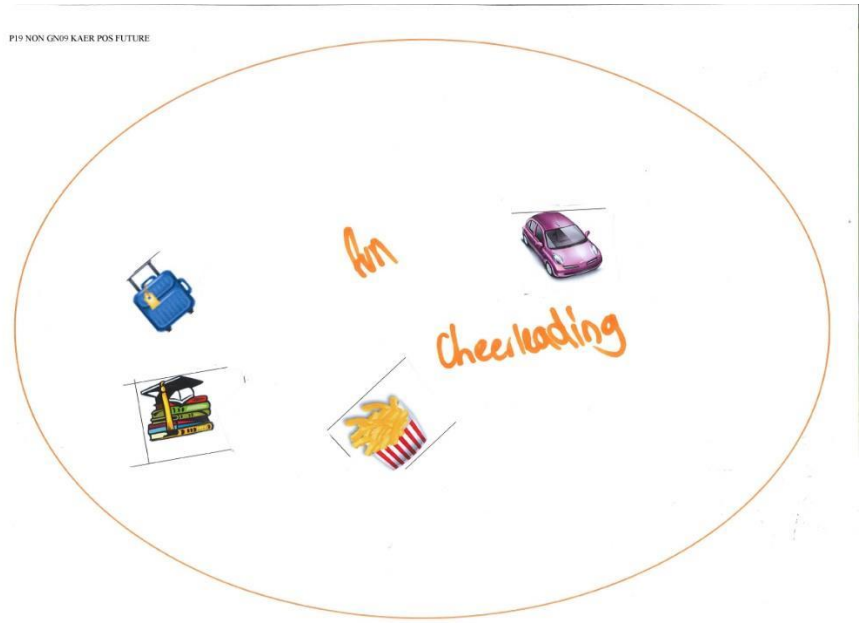
Participant 19 – KAER – PRE & POST - NOW



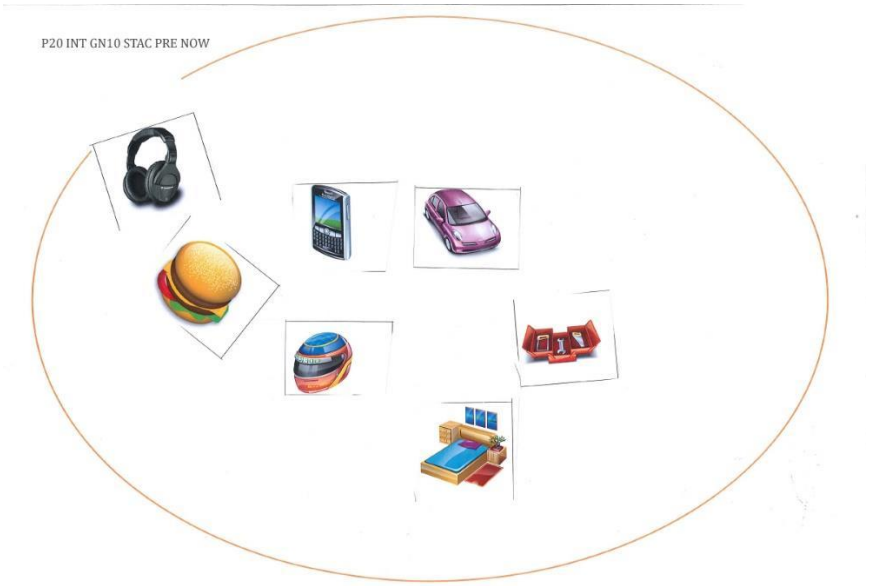


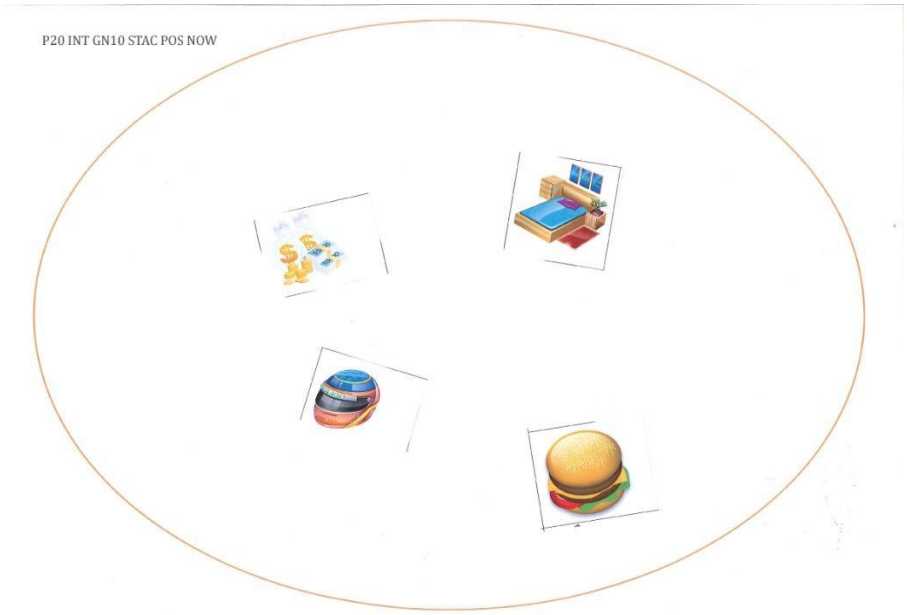
Participant 19 – KAER – PRE & POST - FUTURE



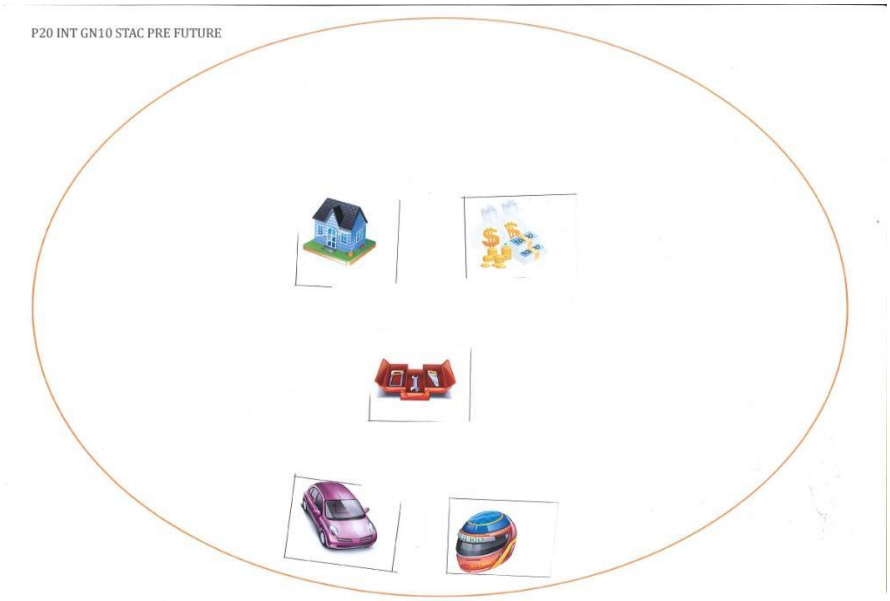


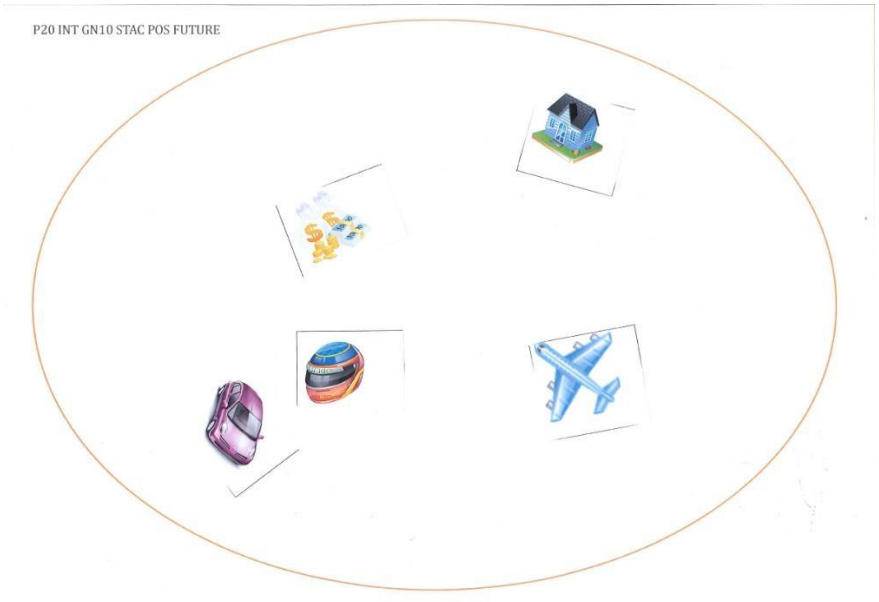
Participant 20 – STAC – PRE & POST - NOW



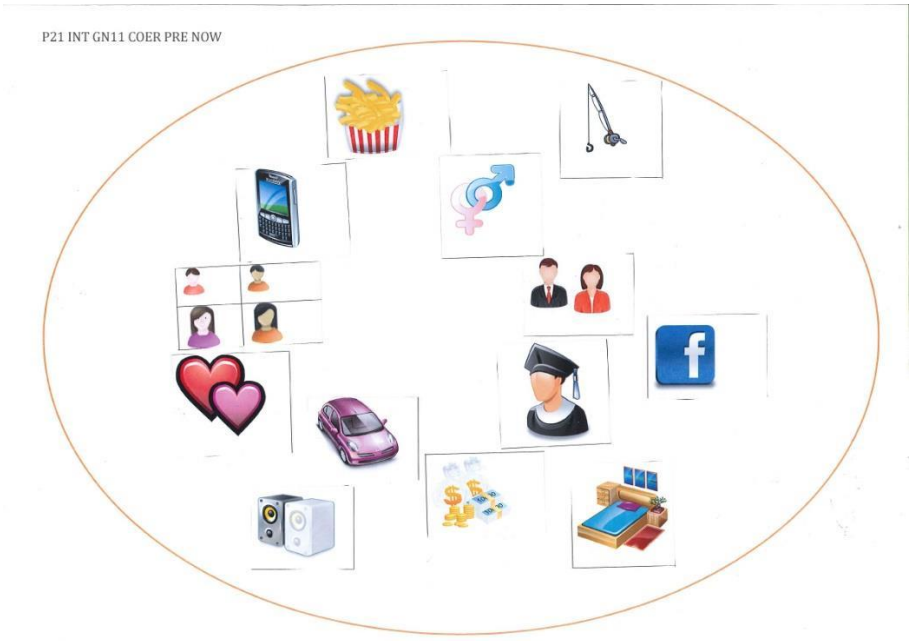


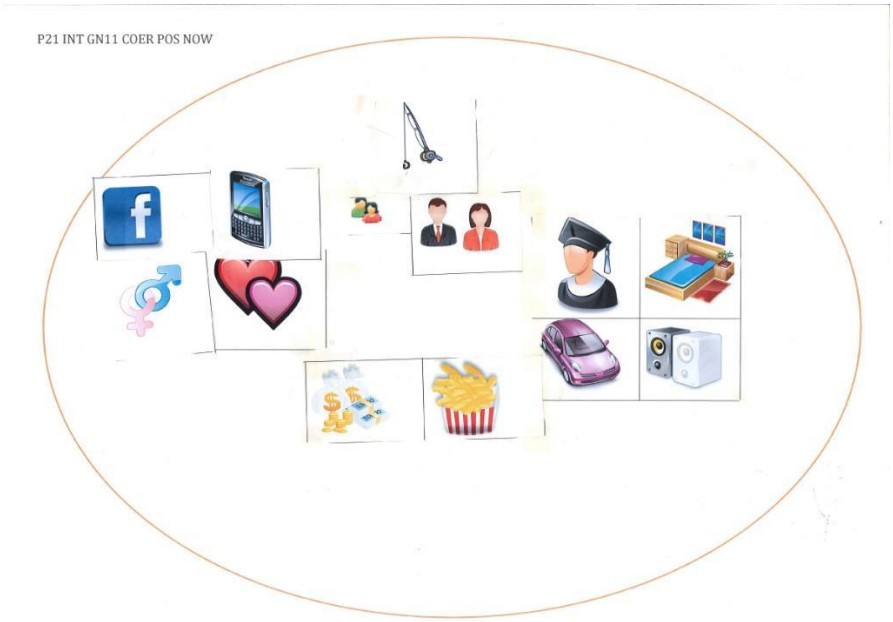
Participant 20 – STAC – PRE & POST - FUTURE



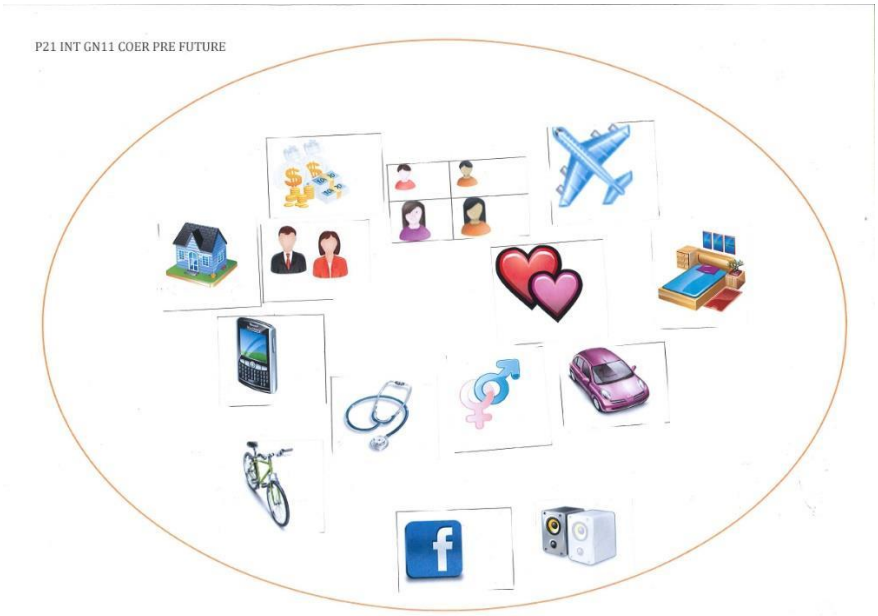


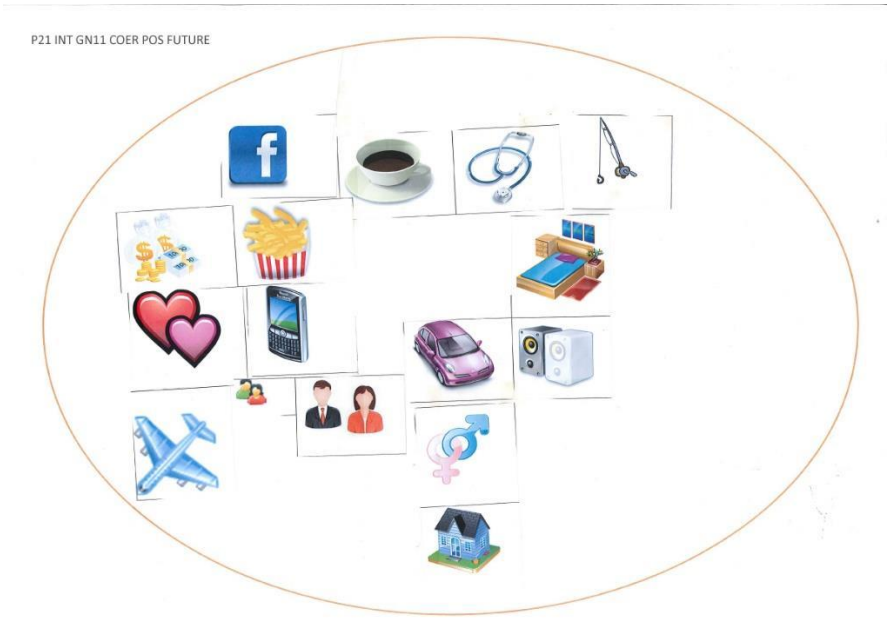
Participant 21 – COER – PRE & POST - NOW





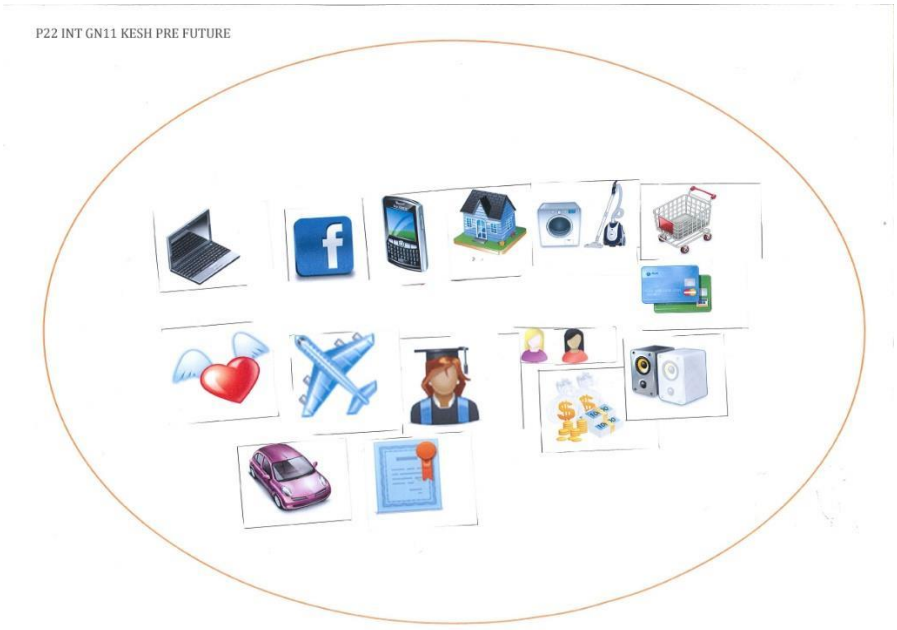
Participant 21 – COER – PRE & POST - FUTURE

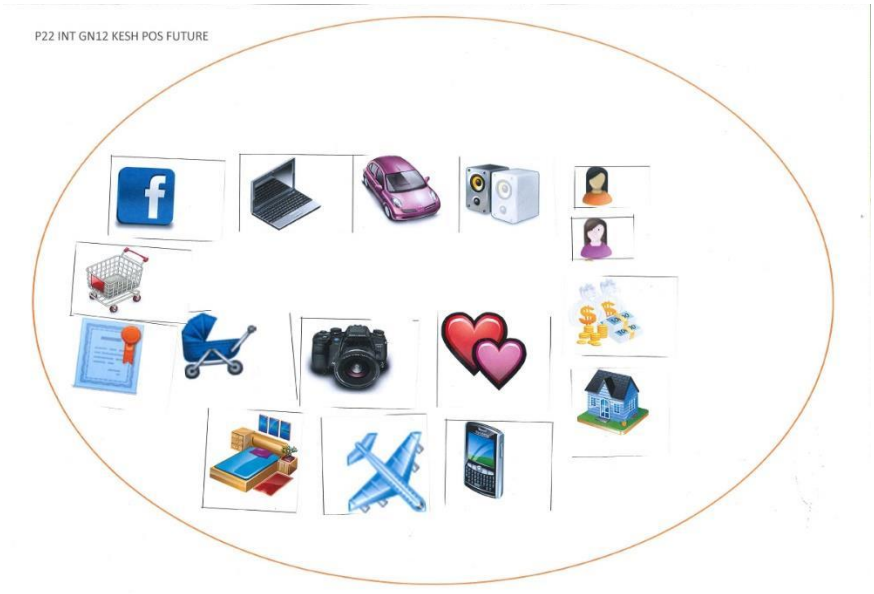




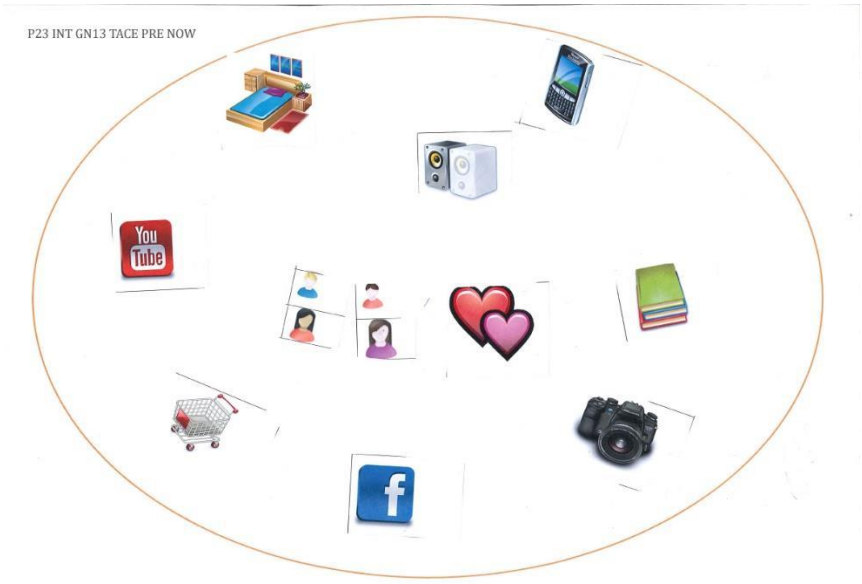
Participant 22 – KESH – PRE & POST - NOW

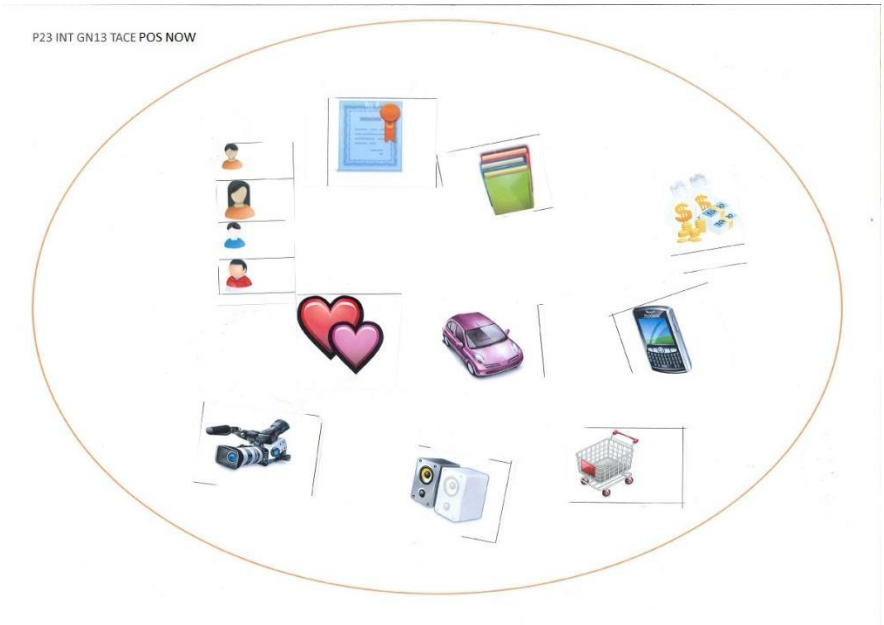
Participant 22 – KESH – PRE & POST - FUTURE





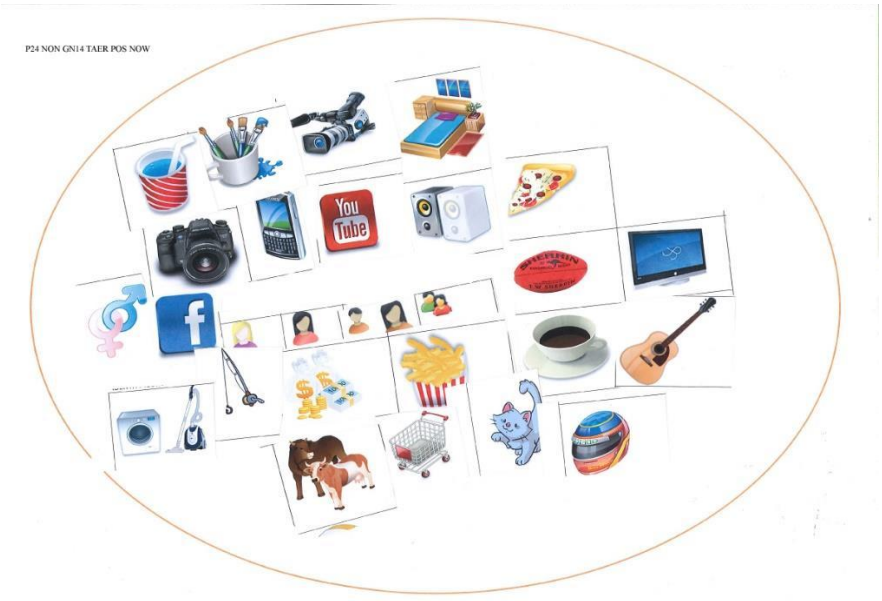
Participant 23 – TACE – PRE & POST - NOW





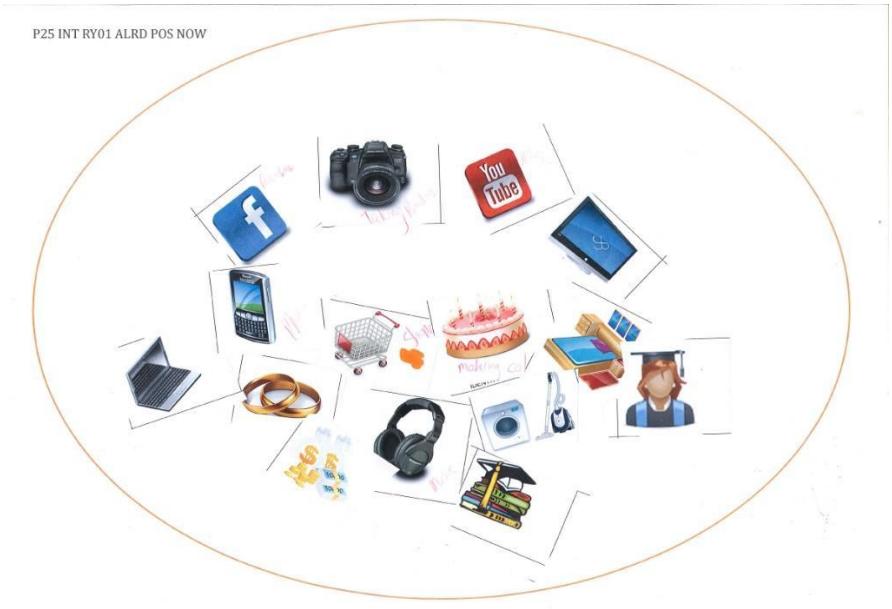
Participant 23 – TACE – PRE & POST - FUTURE

Participant 24 – TAER – PRE & POST - NOW

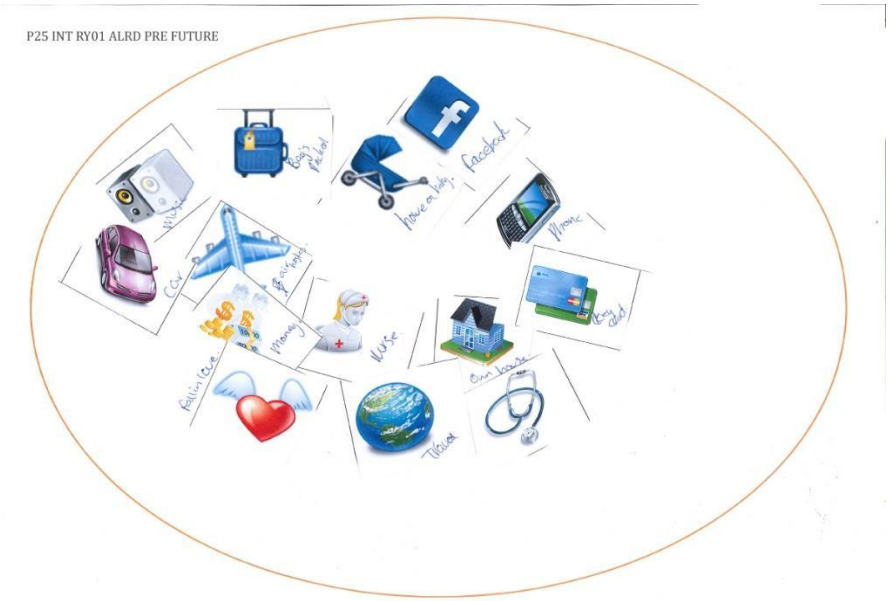


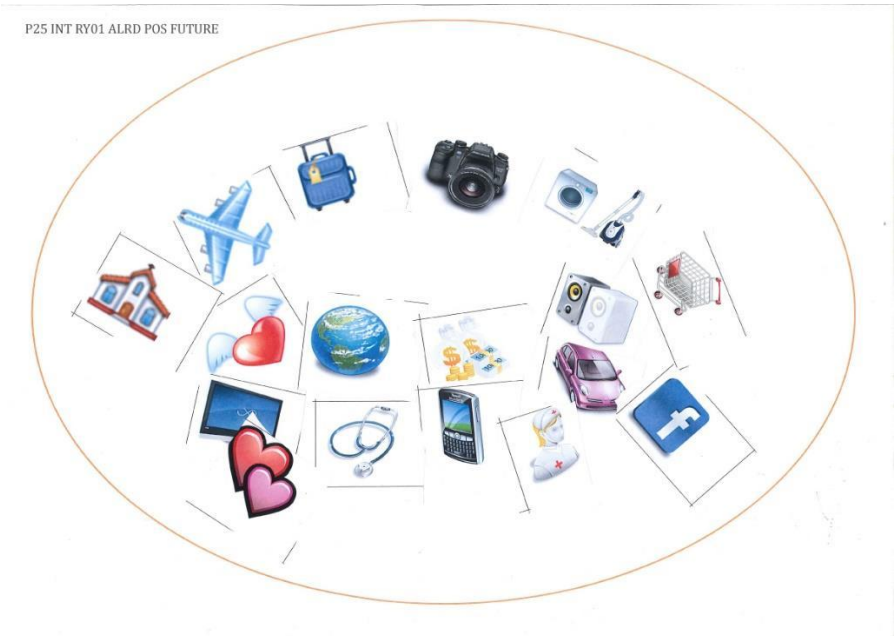
Participant 24 – TAER – PRE & POST - FUTURE

Participant 25 – ALRD – PRE & POST - NOW

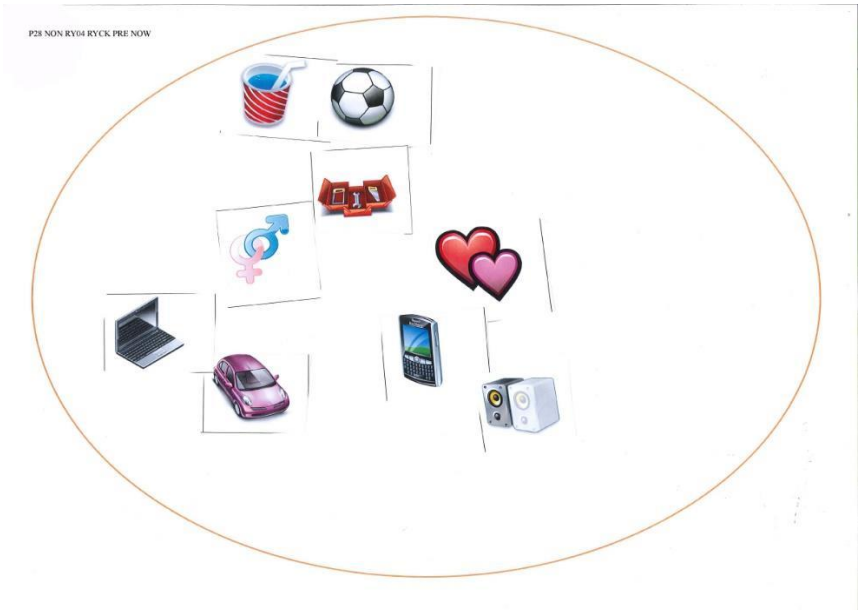


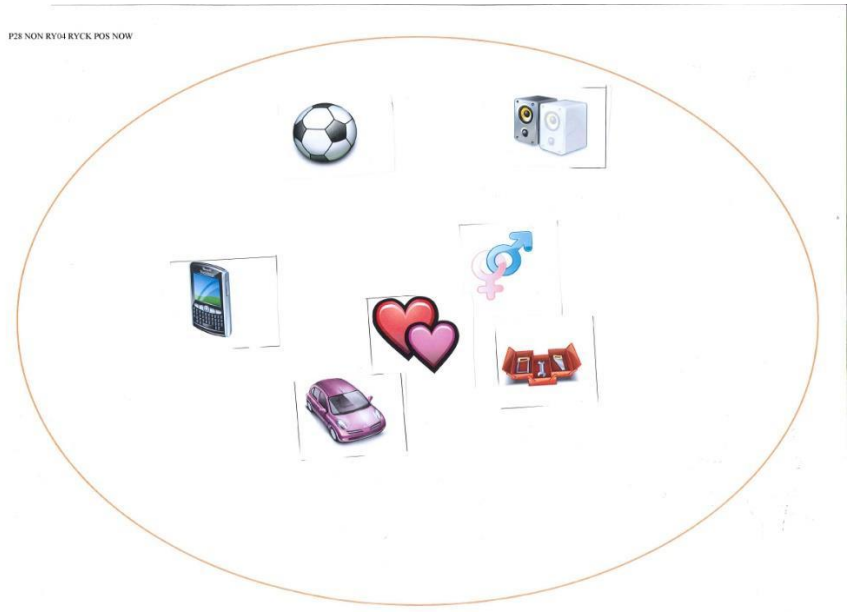
Participant 25 – ALRD – PRE & POST - FUTURE



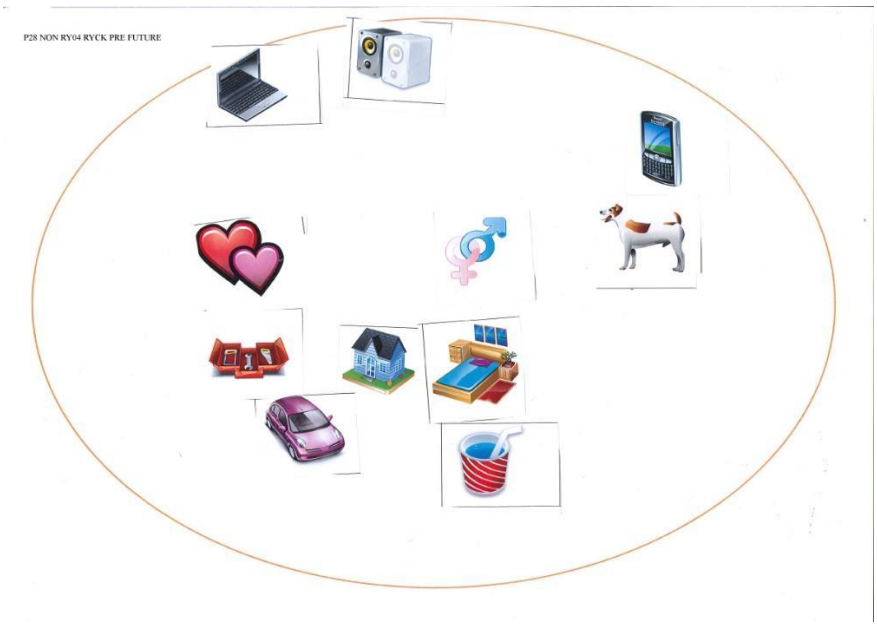


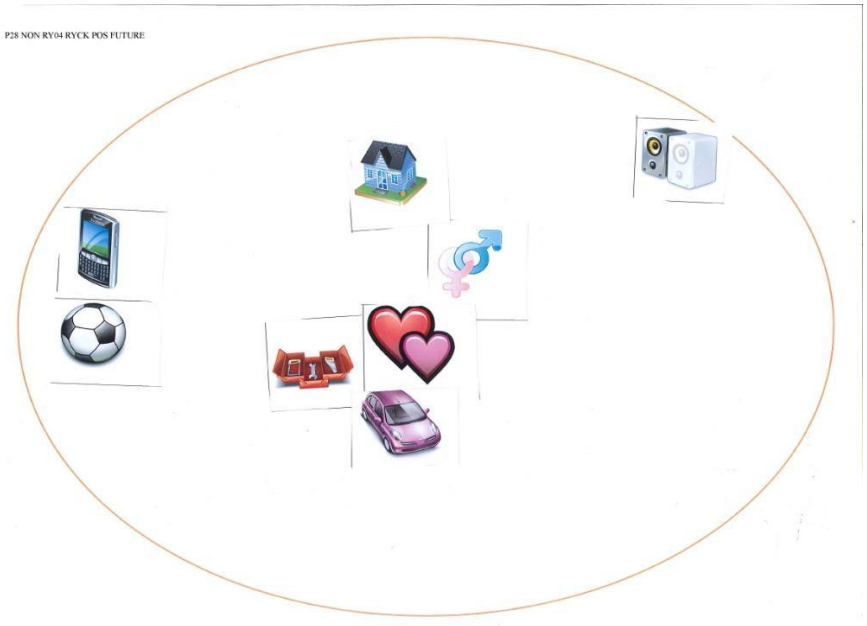
Participant 28 – RYCK – PRE & POST - NOW





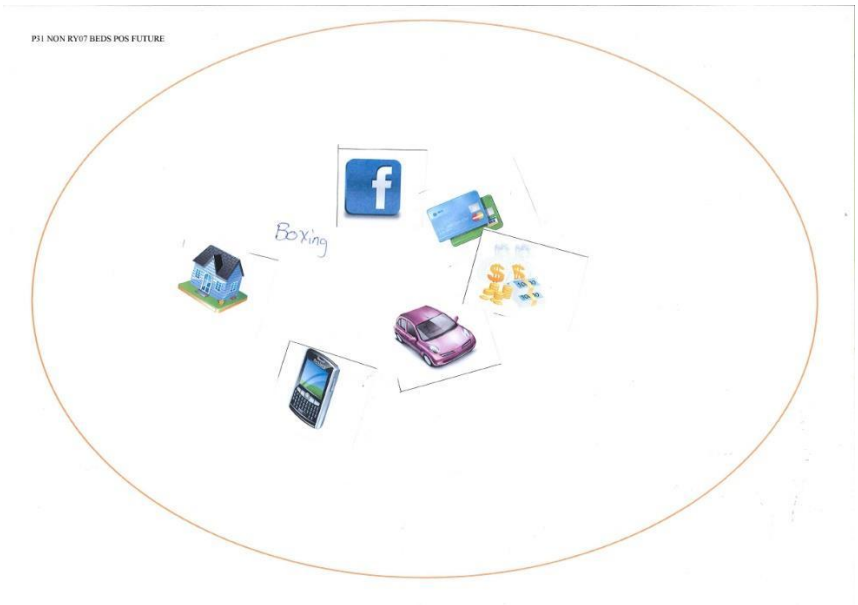
Participant 28 – RYCK – PRE & POST - FUTURE



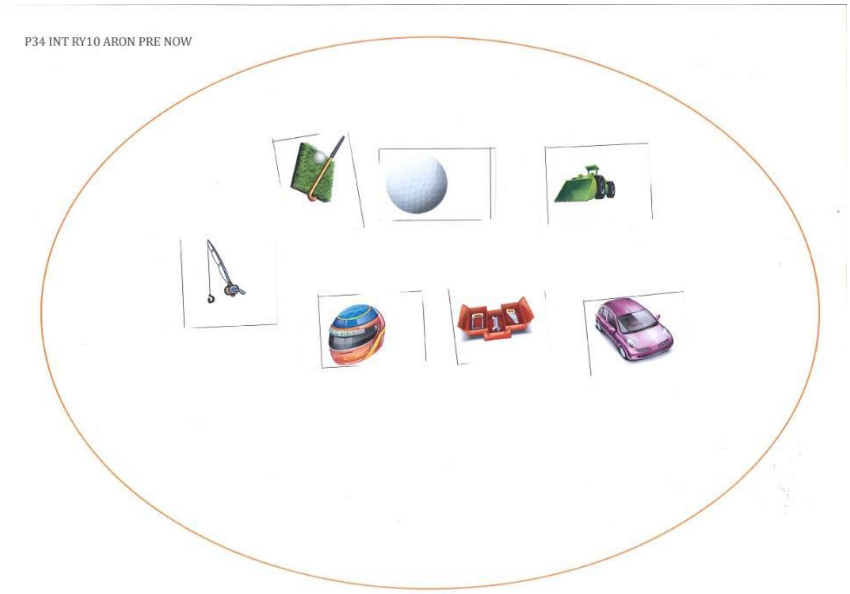


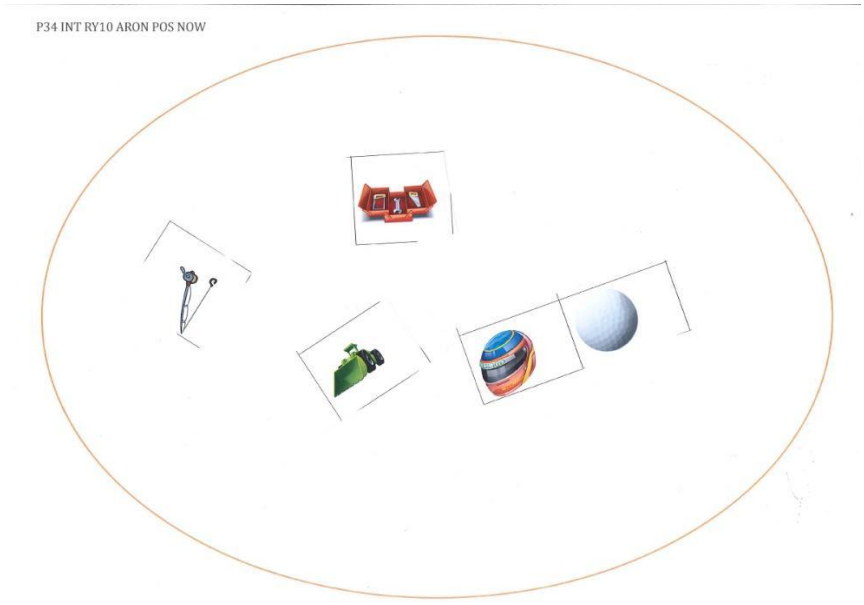
Participant 31 – BEDS – PRE & POST - NOW

Participant 31 – BEDS – PRE & POST - FUTURE



Participant 34 – ARON – PRE & POST - NOW





Participant 34 – ARON – PRE & POST - FUTURE